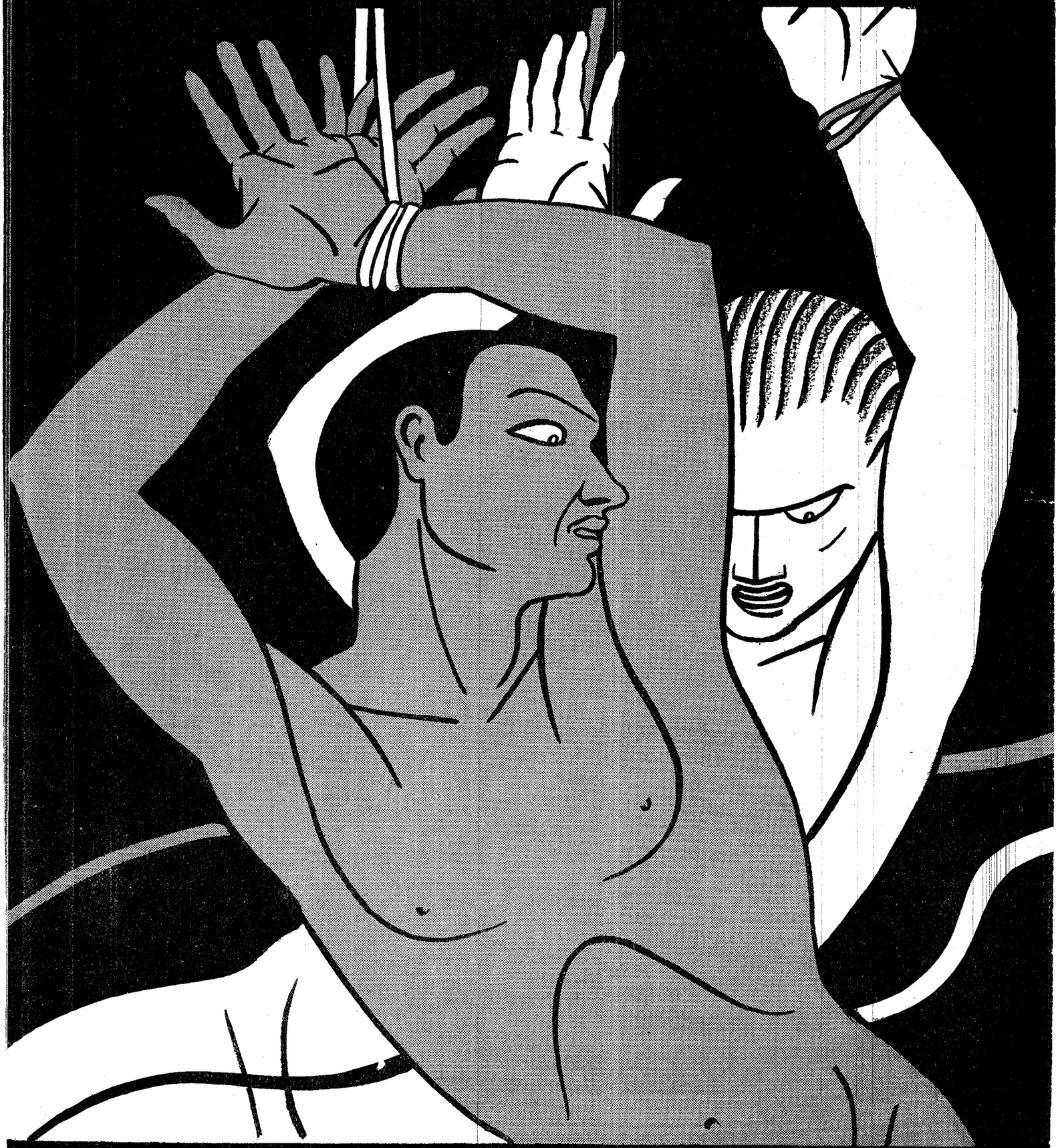
NEW MASSES

NOVEMBER 24, 1936 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY



Sylvia Townsend Warner Robert Forsythe

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

MOVIEGOERS blinked and looked again this week when in the Loew theaters and elsewhere they saw flashed on the screen a newsreel entitled *News of the Day,* produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. How come, some of them wondered; a new film venture from the largest studio without a build-up? The answer is simple and satisfying. *News of the Day* is the new name for what used to be the *Hearst Metrotone News;* the nationwide disapproval of everything Hearstian, crystallized in the anti-Hearst campaigns of the People's Committee Against Hearst of the American League Against War and Fascism, and other groups, made it impossible to show the Hearst reel without arousing a storm of boos and hisses. Result: one small victory; Hearst's name crossed off. But the

same people produce the reel. It is up to friends of freedom and progress everywhere to be vigilant to see that not only the Hearst name is erased, but the Hearst viewpoint as well.

In a letter of greeting to the League of American Writers, Miss Angna Enters, world-famous dancer and pantomimist, writes. ". . . Perhaps I, as an artist without political affiliations, may be permitted to express the belief that artists and writers, in their various ways, are obligated to carry the torch of truth and reason to light the hard upward road for all those oppressed and enslaved, if they themselves would remain free. In helping the Spanish People's Front one helps not only a noble mass of starved and imprisoned people who, for the first time in a thousand years, have a chance to at last free themselves from the most criminal peonage I have ever witnessed, but one helps them to fight for oneself against the insane Nazi-Fascist itch to crush economic, political, and spiritual freedom. . . .

"As a performer in the theater and a worker in the painting arts I have hoped that my social sentiments would be communicated through these forms. We all function within our talents, but it seems to me that the artist, if able, should seek to make pity, terror, and satire serve man's seemingly endless struggle against himself for all forms of freedom—social, spiritual, and æsthetic. There is a great tradition for this belief for a contemporary worker in mime, inherited from the Greek and Roman mimes who were at times such savagely satiric commentators as to terrify dictators and emperors—or for artists from such great living forces as Goya, Hogarth, or Daumier. The modern mime may not be of such great stature, but the task remains and is peculiar to each generation. My return from bleeding Spain, however, made me realize that there are some things which can only be communicated by verbal testimony. . . .

"Which brings me to the atrocities charged only to the People's Front. Churches have admittedly been destroyed—but these churches either have been in the line of fire or have been used as arsenals for fascists and Moors. I myself have seen guns, ammunition, and dynamite brought out of churches, where they have been stored by priests. In my own barrio-village near Malaga, after guns and ammunition were removed neither priest nor church was harmed. I should like to read some casuistic dialectic proving that it is spiritually right to use Christ's churches as arsenals for use by pagan Mohammedan Moors, against whom the church thundered holy crusades. . . .

"What are the Spanish people supposed to do when fired upon by fascists from churches? Are they expected to get down on their knees and give thanks for such blessings? . . . You do not have to be of any political faith to help them by voice or deed. You merely have to be a human being."

Who's Who

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER is well known in this country for her best-selling novels *Lolly Willowes* and *Mr. Fortune's Maggot,* both of which were of a whimsical turn. This year she surprised her large following by writing *Summer Will Show,* a novel with the French revolution of 1848 as its setting, which ended with a quotation from the *Communist Manifesto.* Jean Starr Untermeyer, to whom Miss Warner wrote the letter printed in this issue, is the author of the recent *Winged Child,* a volume of verse.

As Walt Carmon's article indicates, he was formerly managing editor of the NEW MASSES. The years editing a magazine "in a Rolls-Royce" were spent on the staff of *International Literature* in Moscow, whence he has recently returned. His article is one of a number written for our big twenty-fifth anniversary December 15 issue which will be used in earlier numbers because (despite its sixty-four pages) of an overflow of good material.

Malcolm Haskell is a Chicagoan.

Rockwell Kent redrew his cover for this issue from a sticker-stamp he designed for the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, which has been waging a vigorous fight for better conditions for the agricultural toilers in Arkansas. The stamp is bordered with the legend "Celebrate Arkansas Centennial—End Peonage," reminding the world that some Arkansans are still in slavery.

Henry Hart, novelist and critic, is the author of *The Great One,* based on the life of Pennsylvania's political boss, Boies Penrose. . . . Philip Rahv is one of the editors of *Partisan Review.*

Clyde Johnson is secretary of the Share Croppers' Union.

What's What

MORE manuscripts are now in hand for our big December 15 twenty-fifth anniversary issue from: Theodore Dreiser, Edna St. Vincent Millay, William Rose Benét, John Howard Lawson, Vincent Sheean, Albert Halper. And the list of artists looks like a *Who's Who* of the art world. And how about you? Are you doing ten acquaintances a favor by introducing them to the NEW MASSES through this special issue? Send us a buck and ten names and addresses; we'll do the rest.

The staff of the NEW MASSES will be hosts at a party Sunday afternoon, November 22, to raise funds for the purchase of food, clothing, and medical supplies for the troops of the Spanish government. The time is 3 to 8 p. m., at Dorothy White's studio, 40 Union Sq., N. Y. The public is invited.

The class in political and economic questions organized by the Friends of NEW MASSES, which is being conducted by the Marxist, John Barnett, had its opening session on November 12. It will meet on Thursdays at 8:30 p. m. in Room 609, Steinway Hall, 113 W. 57 St., N. Y. C. There is still room for persons interested. Registration is $3.

Editor Bruce Minton speaks on the West Coast strike Fri., Nov. 20, at the Flatbush Youth Center, 531 E. 96th St., Brooklyn.

Flashbacks

"NUTS to you!" was the not very private sentiment of General Smedley Butler two years ago when Wall Street financiers offered to send him to Washington on a white horse. Butler looked his gift horse in the mouth, found it full of fascist decay, reported to Congress, Nov. 20. . . . Striking news men on Seattle's *Post-Intelligencer* mark a shop anniversary this week. *P.-I.* printers walked out Nov. 19, 1919, to force the removal from that paper of an hysterical anti-labor advertisement. The ad, attacking both A.F. of L. and I.W.W., made only one edition, and then in its place the publishers were forced to run a resolution drawn up by the printers . . . A firing squad in Salt Lake City prison ended

the labor organizing and song writing of Joe Hill, Nov. 19, 1915. Fantastic, framed charges of a hold-up murder sufficed to silence his clear American voice, but Wobblies everywhere swelled Hill's bitter chorus, "You'll eat pie in the sky when you die."

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NEW MASSES
NOVEMBER 24, 1936

Fritz

Catalonia in Civil War

A celebrated English novelist, in a letter to the American poet Jean Starr Untermeyer, records her impressions gathered on war-hospital duty in Spain

By Sylvia Townsend Warner

WELL, since I wrote you last we have both been in Barcelona; we returned this week, undamaged but somewhat fatigued. The day after my last letter to you we had a wire asking us both to go there and help in the administration of the British Medical Unit, whose hospital is at a place called Grañen, in Aragon, with a business end in Barcelona.

We went by car from France, and we had a heavenly journey marred only by the fact that we had to go so bloody fast; but we spared time to steal some figs from a dry aromatic hillside near Carcassone, and to spend half an hour scrambling up a slope of the Pyrenees.

At the frontier, Port Bou, we were held up for a couple of days, for though our papers had been adequate when we started, new regulations had been put on, so we had to wait for confirmation. Port Bou is a tiny fishing town, it has one hotel, and that hotel is the headquarters of the local committee. Two militiamen sit outside on sentry duty, sitting in wicker chairs with very old guns across their knees. Everybody is known and friendly, and there is no rollicking whatever. Maybe the Catalan is always a serious animal; certainly he is serious now.

The committee is made up of Anarchists, Communists, trades-unionists—a small Popular Front. They had an astonishing number of languages, French, German, American, English; and I never admired their *sang-froid* more than in one incident of the young man who arrived on our second day, saying he wished to enter Spain to join the English centuria. He was a fair-haired, pink-faced young man, seemingly typically incompetent and easy-going, and informing us casually that if he couldn't get through on his papers he intended to cross the Pyrenees on foot. All this we picked up as he was waiting for his interview. His turn came. He advanced to the man who was to deal with him, a pale, weary man wearing a brown suit and a white tie, and a hammer-and-sickle badge. In his careful French the weary one asked our friend his name.

"Scott-Watts."

(Say this rapidly, and with the English voice, and judge for yourself what it would sound like to a foreign ear.) We waited. The weary one paled slightly, stiffened slightly, as though a soda-water siphon had been unexpectedly let off in his face. But in an instant he recovered his dignity, his poise, and put out his rough working hand for the passport.

Scott-Watts got through. So did we. The train was painted with very lively frescoes, revolutionary sentiments, and the initials of the trade union which has taken over transport. At Barcelona our luggage gave a great deal of pleasure to a very young militiaman who was overseeing the customs. Valentine's* pocket telescope interested him a great deal; he pronounced favorably on a tiny set of traveling tumblers. After examining everything in great detail, he made up his mind that Valentine's habit of traveling with a screwdriver denoted us as nice people, and packed us up again with great swiftness and dexterity.

We felt horribly embarrassed in the tram because we were wearing hats. Hats are not worn; they are bourgeois, and it was pleasant to throw them into the bottom of the cupboard and walk out hatless on to the Rambla, where a barrel-organ was playing the "International" with several coloratura improvements and nightingale effects.

At first meeting we liked the Catalans, and that liking turned very soon into love. I have never met a more admirable people. At the beginning I had learned to ask a practically indispensable question in Spanish. Not much to begin with, but when I tried it, it worked. If I had had the tongues of men and angels I could not have met with more kindness, maybe not so much.

We also visited a great many committees. This was necessary because of getting permits and stamps. It became my passion. If I had been allowed to I would have spent all my time at committees. One, especially dear to me, was an Anarchist committee called Society for the Persecution of Fascists. The head persecutor was one of the nicest men I have ever met, dry and pale and wrinkled, like a wise, warm-blooded lizard. Our particular concern with him was the flat over his office, which was being given to the Medical Unit as an office. Its fascist owners had not removed all their goods. In particular there was a large frame of unfinished *petit-point;* and to my life's end I shall recollect how, going in in a hurry, I found the persecutor and our cook Asuncion, who had been sent there to clean up, standing side by side before the *petit-point,* mutually respecting the industry and deploring the idleness which breeds such industry—nor with what welcoming salutes they called me in to agree with them.

For it is small things like this, details of behavior, which stamp a revolutionary situation. One grows to take it for granted that

* Valentine Ackland (a mutual friend of Miss Warner and Mrs. Untermeyer), one of whose poems appears on page 12 of this issue.

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people are courageous, that people are sincere and sensible and that they are, on a 90 per-cent chance, destined to be bombed, gassed, shot out of hand, or crushed under heavy lorries, which is the latest fascist device for getting rid of prisoners. But these natural gestures of kindness and humanity never lose their validity. Nor did I lose sight for a moment of the fact that both the persecutor and the cook would (and probably had) kill fascists as one kills cockroaches. That, too, would have been a natural gesture, and the ability to kill and the ability to remain kind flower together from the same root of conviction and experience.

More things about Barcelona: up to the Rambla every morning went a train, wearing an enormous breastknot of flowers. I asked why, and was told that this tram, hastily blinded with bits of iron, had been sent crashing through a machine-gun barrage on the nineteenth of July. Since then it has returned to its ordinary duties, but every morning the proud garland is renewed.

One most interesting thing, unbelievable to an Anglo-Saxon, perhaps; impossible anywhere but in Catalonia, quickened with a national minority feeling: when the rebellion began, and the troops were marched through the streets as though on parade, and suddenly began to fire on the people, there was no time to summon the workers from the factories. Then the first defense was taken up by the police and the middle-class intellectuals, fighting side by side!

I must not forget the British consulate. Beautiful things are told of thee, O Zion. Every night at nine o'clock those British subjects who had sought the shelter of their country's flag lie down on mattresses in a sort of glass-roofed winter-garden *cum* aquarium, near the harbor. They must be in by nine, away from the dangers of a workers' city. There they lie, suffering torments of heat during the hot weather, and now, I suppose, suffering torments of cold. There they lie, poor sheep, defended only by a glass roof and a flag from the perils of Barcelona, which, of course, has been quiet and normal for a couple of months.

All the churches are out of commission. Some have been burned out, others dismantled. The cathedral is preserved as a national monument, but cannot be entered without a permit. Some are used as storehouses, being filled with foodstuffs and hospital stores, others are left unused with their doors boarded up. From the belfry of one we watched the bells being lowered and an anti-aircraft gun mounted in their stead.

It was interesting to compare this deliberate spoliation with the condition of the rich houses whose owners had fled, and which had been taken over by the state. We went over several of these, as there was a proposal that the unit should have one to use as a rest-house for nurses from the front. All these houses had been searched by the people's committees—searched for papers and arms. Their floors were covered with a litter of papers, and there was no other sign that they had been gone through. Scent bottles stood on flounced dressing tables, little cocktail sets that a touch would break had been carefully skied on dresser-tops, clothes hung in wardrobes. Then I remembered how all the papers had said that the churches had been destroyed by a wanton mob—alternatively, that they had been sacked by order—alternatively, that they had really not suffered at all. But what was done to the churches was done thoroughly and deliberately, as one burns and cleans after scarlet fever; and had been done by the people themselves, for Catalonia is mainly an Anarchist country, and Anarchists, unlike Communists, will not assume the responsibility for giving orders; and by the same people who preserved the cocktail sets and the scent bottles—symbols, one would suppose, of a tyranny quite as oppressive as the churches, and much more tempting to loot.

I remembered this again one day when, in the garden of the grand house, finally selected, a vile pottery plaque of the Virgin and Child was discovered in a summer house. Two men from the committee came, asked for hammers, and set about smashing it with exactly the serious expression of one who finds an infected handkerchief, after it is supposed the house is wholesome to live in again. The concierge and her family stood watching, and then pointed out in a thicket, a plaster statue, some garden nymph or other. The men looked at it, shook their heads. "It's not a saint," they said, and walked off.

New Women of Spain — Elizabeth Olds

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The Soviet Constitution

Discussed pro and con for months, the draft of the basic law now goes before the All-Union Congress

By Joshua Kunitz

THE Soviet peoples are in a state of eager excitement. On November 25 the extraordinary session of the All-Union Congress of Soviets will meet to consider a new fundamental law for the country. The draft of the new basic law—the new constitution—was worked out by a special commission under the direct guidance and with the direct participation of Stalin.

The keen interest of the whole people in the forthcoming deliberations is a result of months of study, criticism, and proposed amendment of the draft constitution. Millions of copies of the draft have been broadcast in many languages throughout the U.S.S.R., and literally scores of thousands of letters, discussing the document pro and con, have been published in the central, regional, and local press. Every factory, office, farm, trade union, coöperative, village soviet, club—every unit of the Red Army and Fleet—has had meeting after meeting discussing the draft law. But the letters to the press are the most tangible evidence of the popular feeling.

Some day, I hope, these letters will be collected, classified, translated, published. They constitute a precious social document, revealing a stirring picture of dozens of nationalities and scores of millions of people, only recently emerged from oppression and ignorance, actually hammering out on the anvil of their life experience a weapon for peace and prosperity, security and freedom, equal rights for all regardless of sex, race, nationality, or previous social status. Some of the letters have been sharply critical, including those which argue against the right of suffrage or office-holding for the former bourgeoisie and the present clergy. Many offer amendments refining the draft this way or that, and no doubt some of these suggestions will be incorporated in the adopted version. But every man and woman has had his say, and the opportunity through discussion on the floor of his trade union, coöperative, local soviet, or what-not, to instruct his deputy to the congress on any changes that are desired.

If a perusal of the reports of the Soviet deputies before their constituents, as well as the numerous suggestions and comments deluging the Soviet papers since the publication of the draft constitution, fills the lover of progress with a deep sense of satisfaction, a parallel perusal of the intellectual exercises on the same subject in the capitalist press arouses sensations close to distress. How the bourgeois gentlemen manage to cheapen and vulgarize everything pertaining to the Soviets! What misinterpretations, what distortions!

Soviet Farmscape — Frank Horowitz

"The constitution contains nothing new," cry some. "The Bolsheviks are only aping the bourgeois-democratic constitutions of the West," opine others, or, "It is the usual Bolshevik bluff and propaganda."

The more learned editorial scribes find solace in the "fact" that the Soviet constitution has "legalized private property," thus proving that "the Bolsehviks are turning back to capitalism." The *Herald Tribune,* that valiant fighter for a pure proletarian line, discovers that in enunciating the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work," the draft constitution represents an obvious betrayal of the basic precepts of Marxism. And the Trotskyites announce the "destruction of the Soviets" and the "establishment of a totalitarian state on the Hitler and Mussolini model."

I cannot, within the limited space allotted to me, deal with all the misrepresentations one encounters in the capitalist press. I will confine myself only to the conceptions of property and classes contained in the draft constitution and certain to remain in the final text adopted by the All-Union Congress.

The economic structure of the U.S.S.R. [reads Article 4] is based on the socialist system of economy and the socialist ownership of the implements and means of production, firmly established as a result of the liquidation of the capitalist system of economy, the annulment of private property in the implements and means of production, and the abolition of exploitation of man by man.

These are not mere words, mere wishes. They are a simple, unexaggerated statement of what exists in the Soviet Union and what cannot be found anywhere else; the capitalist system of economy has really been ended; private property in the means of production has really been annulled; socialist ownership of all the basic means of production, distribution, and exchange has really been established; socialist property, either in the form of state property or in the form of coöperative and kolhoz property, has actually become the basis of Soviet economy.

The land and all that is beneath it, as well as the waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, railways, water and air transport, banks, means of communication, large state-organized agricultural enterprises, such as state farms, machine and tractor stations, and the like, also the principal dwelling fund in the cities and industrial localities, are state property, that is, the property of the whole people. [Article 6.]

Public enterprises in collective farms and coöperative organizations, with their livestock and implements, products raised or manufactured by the collective farms and coöperative organizations, as well as their public structures, constitute the public, socialist property of the collective farms and coöperative organizations. [Article 7.]

Such is the conception of property as fixed

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into the fundamental law of a socialist society. Whereas the constitutions of all the bourgeois states are primarily designed to protect the rights of a small minority to their rents, interests, and profits; whereas the bourgeois "democratic" constitutions are based primarily on the sacredness and inviolability of *private* property, the draft constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is designed exclusively to protect the rights of the working population—now practically the entire population of the Soviet Union—and is based primarily on the sacredness and inviolability of *public* property.

It is the duty of every citizen of the U.S.S.R. to safeguard and fortify public, socialist property as the sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet system, and as the source of the wealth and strength of the country, as the source of the prosperous and cultured life of all the toilers. Persons attempting to infringe upon public, socialist property are enemies of the people. [Article 131.]

Trotskyite Max Eastman, in the *Herald Tribune,* has denounced Stalin for having re-established "the death penalty for theft, abolished in all civilized countries more than a century ago." He exclaims: "That's how much freedom there is in the Soviet Union!" If one were inclined to be facetious, one might counter this by exclaiming: "The freedom to steal and terrorize—that's the kind of freedom the Trotskyites want in the Soviet Union!" But here I wish to call attention to the fact that in referring to the law about theft, the Trotskyite gentleman quite characteristically failed to mention that that law applied only to the theft or malicious destruction of public, socialist property, and that it was adopted several years ago when kulaks and other counter-revolutionary elements resorted to wholesale pilfering and destruction of property in collective farms and coöperatives as a means of disorganizing the whole process of industrialization and collectivization. It was not *theft as theft,* not *any* kind of theft that was punishable by death: it was theft of *public* property as a means of *counter-revolution.* Surely even Trotskyites know, or, at least, are presumed to know, the lengths to which "civilized" capitalist countries have gone and will yet go in protecting the rights of *private* property. When legal means are inadequate, resort is had to extra-legal means. When constitutions become hindrances, constitutions are thrown overboard. When the revolutionary masses become menacing, the "civilized" countries employ violence, murder, fascism, and war. The courts and the police, the armies and the navies of the capitalist world have always been instruments for the protection of wealth. Surely even Trotskyites know all that, yet they dare attack the first workers' and peasants' socialist state for declaring its readiness, especially at the outset, when the remnants of the bourgeois past in man's psychology have not yet been completely eradicated, to use every means at its disposal to frustrate any counter-revolutionary attempt against socialized, collectivized, public property, against "the sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet system."

Some day, no doubt, the point in the constitution declaring persons attempting to infringe upon public, socialist property "enemies of the people" will become superfluous. Its educational function will have been performed. The sacredness of socialist property will have become an organic part of the moral code of every Soviet citizen. Then the law will be annulled—the Bolsheviks do not write laws for eternity. They do not hold that laws and constitutions necessarily improve with age.

But what about the "legalization of private property"? What about Articles 7 (second half), 9, and 10? Aren't they a concession to capitalism, a major Communist retreat?

Let us examine Article 10 first:

The personal property of citizens in their income from work and in their savings, in their dwelling house and auxiliary household economy, domestic articles and utensils, as well as objects of personal use and comfort, is protected by law.

Where is the concession to capitalism here? Where is the Communist retreat? Wherein does personal property, individual ownership of objects of personal use, contradict the social ownership of the means of production? There is no contradiction. On the contrary, the social ownership of the implements and means of production is the source of an increasingly prosperous and cultured life, and of more *personal* possessions, more *means of consumption* for every member of the society.

The Soviet Union is still at the very be-

UNNATURAL HISTORY—IX

In particularly stormy weather on the Continent, there can be observed, fluttering over the public squares, swooping up and down the streets, screeching, strutting, hawk-like monsters, the Fiery Flop (*Delaroques fascetius*) and the famous British Bustard (*Mucki moseli*). The former bird, which lays many eggs, is very fashionable this year in Paris with the Schneider-Creusot and royalist set, while the British Bustard is quite the rage with some of the peerage. They have both been compared to the ancient Phœnix in that they were supposed to have built a funeral pyre, lighted it with the fanning of their wings, and then to have risen from the flames with renewed life.—JOHN MACKEY.

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Desolate Barns

Lithograph by Jack Markow

ginning of its socialist development, yet it is already demonstrating that the steady and certain enhancement of the country's accumulated social wealth finds immediate and welcome expression in the ever-growing quantity and improving quality of the personal possessions of every individual. Even under communism, of which socialism is the initial stage, such personal, individual possessions will, one imagines, be protected by society.

On the whole this holds true also of that part of Article 7 which guarantees "each collective farm household, *for its own use,* a small plot of land attached to the house and, as *individual property,* an auxiliary establishment on the plot, the house, produce animals and poultry, and *minor* agricultural implements." Most of the above items do not constitute means of production at all, they are really *means of consumption.* Their being individually owned, therefore, does not in any way contradict the basic socialist principle of collective ownership. As to the "small plot of land attached to the house," though it may properly be considered a means of *production,* it is *not* individual but *public* property, given to the collective farmer *for his personal use.* The farmer does not own it; he cannot transfer, sell, or lease it out. He can only work it himself to supplement his main income which is derived from the *collective* enterprise.

Of course, in so far as the collective farmer places surplus produce on the market, he does make capitalistic use of the limited means and "minor implements" of production still at his disposal. But this scarcely affects the correctness of the statement in Article 9 that "the socialist system of economy . . . is the dominant form of economy in the U.S.S.R." Collective farms *are* the basis of Soviet agriculture. They are *socialist* enterprises embracing over 90 percent of the peasantry. The overwhelmingly greater part of the collective farmer's income, both in money and produce, is derived from his membership and work in this coöperative, collective, socialist enterprise. The provision in Article 7 simply proves that the installation of a modern, mechanized, large-scale, collectively operated agriculture was not, and could not conceivably be, accomplished without retaining at the beginning some traces of the primitive, petty, individually conducted agriculture to which the Russian peasant had been accustomed for many centuries.

"All right," say the foreign skeptics, "but what about Article 9, which definitely *allows* small private farms and other enterprises of individual peasants and artisans—how does that fit into a socialist constitution?" Variations of the same criticism have also appeared in letters published in the Soviet press, one actually calling for the deletion of Article 9 because "it spoils the façade of our socialist structure, our socialist constitution."

The answer to this argument is that the Soviet draft constitution is no wish-fulfillment mechanism; it is a simple, straightforward statement of contemporary Soviet fact. Anybody familiar with Soviet statistics knows that about 10 percent of the Soviet peasantry is still uncollectivized. Collectivization in the Soviet Union is not a dogma, a religion; it is not compulsory, it is optional. Peasants go in for it when they see its economic and social advantages. When no such immediate advantages are perceptible, they not unnaturally prefer to stay uncollectivized. There are, for instance, numerous little farms scattered through the mountain regions of the Caucasus, the Crimea, Central Asia, etc.—their isolated position and the very terrain on which they are located preclude the immediate possibility of profitable large-scale collectivized farming. To whose interest would it be, then, to force or persuade or cajole those farmers to form collectives? To no one's. It would be the height of stupidity for the Soviet government to illegalize such peasant households or to force them administratively into collectives—this out of a sheer devotion to an abstract ideal of socialism, out of a sheer determination to present to the world a uniform socialist façade.

(To be concluded)

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Jacob Burck

SUSPENDED!

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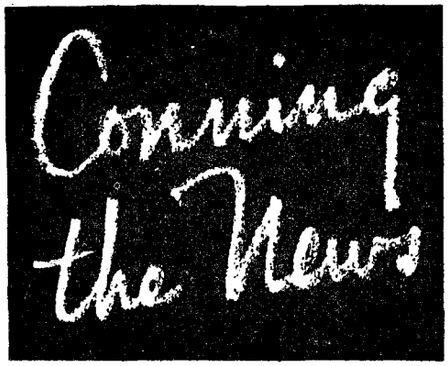

Covering the events of the week ending November 16

POLITICAL experts for the most part have fought shy of the class implications of the Roosevelt landslide, but organized labor in the first post-election week showed unmistakable signs of a new sense of power. On all fronts unionized workers pushed forward to consolidate their gains while the memory of November 3 remained fresh in the popular mind. Garment workers, meeting in convention, took a strong C.I.O. position by refusing to send delegates to the A.F. of L. convention in Tampa. Both the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union launched intensive drives to recruit non-union workers. The United Textile Workers announced a similar drive, centering in the South, and steel-union recruiting took on a mass aspect, particularly in the Chicago area.

Occupying the center of the labor stage, however, was the struggle of the maritime workers. On the waterfronts, both east and west, strikers increased the solidarity that has marked the present walkout. Leaders of the strike were greatly encouraged by the victory of grocery warehousemen, who won wage increases in a settlement that did not obligate them to go through the picket lines of other strikers. Pacific Coast shipping remained paralyzed, despite the offer of union leaders to negotiate. Stubborn opposition of the shipmasters, pointed out strike committee chairman Harry Bridges, is directed against the very existence of the unions rather than against the specific demands that caused the walkout.

In the East, while the great majority of shipowners rejected the seamen's invitation to negotiate, the first break in the employers' ranks occurred when the American Range Lines, operating a fleet of tankers, agreed to the men's demands for West Coast wages and working conditions. The settlement was delayed, however, by refusal of reactionary International Seamen's Union officials to ratify. One of those officials, David Grange, found himself in court for threatening a picket. The seamen who had forced Grange's arrest demanded in court that he account for $134,000, missing from the union treasury. Evidence was offered by the men of bribes received by I.S.U. officials from shipowners for signing a contract last March over the six-to-one opposition of the rank and file.

AT the moment of labor's great opportunity to forge ahead, the American Federation of Labor prepared for its Tampa convention, which must act on the suspended C.I.O. unions. Despite a campaign of Red-baiting and the slanderous attacks of John P. Frey and William Green, the Executive Council split, nine to eight, on the question of recommending expulsion of the Lewis unions. Rank-and-file pressure mounted to force the council to preserve unity in the labor movement by reinstating the unions, but the die-hard craft bloc stubbornly refused the offer of Major George Berry to arbitrate. Cited by his own United Mine Workers to answer charges of conspiracy to expel the U.M.W. from the Federation, Green found himself technically in danger of losing his A.F. of L. membership altogether, to say nothing of his office. Whereupon he invoked the Muse, and became a member of the affiliated Federation of Musicians.

Industry, as well as labor, was conscious of a change in the air. Result: General Motors, Chrysler, du Pont, U.S. Steel tumbled over each other in a mad rush to raise wages. On analysis, these wage boosts turned out to be approximately four percent of dividends declared at the same time. New low was achieved by U.S. Steel, which attempted to utilize even this niggardly concession to establish a permanent linking of wages with the cost-of-living index. The attempt was apparently as naïve as it was ill-intentioned, since the majority of workers upheld the Lewis dictum that a forced agreement of this sort constituted a "yellow dog contract." Employees who rebelled against the company's attempt to coerce them into accepting the agreement for one year by threatening to withhold raises from those who refused, appealed through their representatives to the federal government. Secretary of Labor Perkins tentatively ruled that "the employee representatives are not authorized by the employees whom they represent to sign any agreement on their behalf which would bind them in any way." And at a press conference President Roosevelt took the stand that the cost of living must not be considered if it is to act as a curb on the improvement of wages.

ON the political front also labor displayed a determination to consolidate its gains. Meeting in Washington, officers of the two great garment unions, International Ladies Garment Workers' and Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, launched a drive for a revamped N.R.A. Speaking for a combined membership of 375,000 workers, the union officials called for federal legislation providing for minimum wages, maximum hours, and fair working conditions. If such legislation cannot be passed within the framework of the Constitution, the unions will press for a constitutional amendment.

More significant politically was the decision of the union officers to support Labor's Non-Partisan League as a permanent organization. The Amalgamated's action, according to its general board, was taken "in order that labor may have a political instrument through which it can continuously act in the interests of the public welfare, both in Congress and in the state legislatures."

Confirming its avowed intentions of establishing itself on a permanent basis, the Non-Partisan League, through its governing board, announced plans for the immediate future. Lobbying will be one of the main activities of the League, which will carry on its work through national and state legislative committees. Although its plans have not been completely worked out, it is known that the organization is considering a drive for a new N.R.A., a housing program, and wage-and-hours legislation.

Concerning the formation of a nation-wide farmer-labor party, Major Berry, who with John L. Lewis and Sidney Hillman announced the League's plans, said that the organization was committed "to the proposition of thoroughly organizing the workers and their friends of the liberal movement of America so that we can be in a position to adjust ourselves intelligently and effectively to any political realignment that occurs."

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, obviously impressed by the labor strength that made possible his landslide, sought once more to find a way out of the Supreme Court's ban on the N.R.A. A federal incorporation and licensing law loomed as a possible solution, though this and other suggestions continued to be no more than the subject of study by various government agencies and presidential advisers. It was reported that on his return from South America the President would make a careful study of reports on the plan, which would enable the federal government to control wages and working conditions of all corporations doing an interstate business through the enforced licensing of such companies, and through a system of federal incorporation. Roosevelt himself maintained what even the New York *Times* called "an extremely cautious attitude both in formulating and discussing his plans for the future." Representatives of business, it was indicated, would have a hand in working out the plan before it got as far as Congress.

Drastic reorganization of government agencies appeared to be under consideration, most important of which was the contemplated incorporation of the Rural Resettlement Administration in the old-line Department of Agriculture. Championing this move was Resettlement Administrator Rexford G. Tugwell, who saw in it a guarantee of congressional appropriations for his work which in all likelihood would otherwise be denied. Opposed were the right-wing followers of former A.A.A. Administrator Chester C. Davis. The resumption of the Tugwell-Davis feud gave promise of showing which way Wallace, and inferentially Roosevelt, intend to move in

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agricultural policy. Especially worried were those agricultural experts who fear that Tugwell's prospective tenant-aid program might jeopardize the administration's farm program by antagonizing the southern planters. Tugwell announced, for congressional consideration, a broad plan for financing tenants in the purchase of small farms. Calling for an appropriation of $50,000,000, the program would permit 10,000 carefully selected croppers to buy small farms on a five-year trial, with forty years to pay if they made good.

CIVIL LIBERTIES in America made one pronounced gain during the week, but in exchange it suffered several setbacks. On the credit side of the ledger was the decision of the Alabama Circuit Court in the case of Jack Barton. The high state court declared unconstitutional the ordinance providing a fine and a jail sentence for anyone caught in Alabama in possession of two or more identical pieces of "seditious" literature. Communist Barton, jailed under the illegal statute, was released.

While freeing Barton, Alabama committed two fresh offenses against the democratic rights of its citizens. A Jefferson County grand jury, despite overwhelming evidence, failed to bring in a single indictment against the mobsters who flogged labor organizer Joseph Gelders two months ago because of his active interest in the Barton case. On the other hand, another Alabama jury sentenced Homer Welch, textile-union organizer, to ten years in prison on a manslaughter charge growing out of the death of a deputy in the course of a police attack on a picket line. The third debit item was the sudden citing of labor lawyer Leo Gallagher to appear before the California State Bar Association to show cause why he should not be disbarred. The action resulted from a statement by Gallagher that he would defend any maritime worker arrested for strike activity. The association refused to disclose who made the complaint against Gallagher, to give the accused a copy of the exact charge, or even to grant a public hearing to the man who was counsel for Mooney, McNamara, the Sacramento criminal-syndicalist prisoners, Dimitrov, and hundreds of other working-class leaders.

AFTER having Madrid within range of their artillery for ten days, Spain's fascist invaders found themselves at the end of the week still on the outskirts of the capital, unable to advance. Madrid's militiamen held their lines under fierce cannonading and machine-gun fire, with the rebels making free use of two-hundred-pound shells. Rapidly moving detachments of loyalist raiders, headed by swift tanks, were reported to be playing havoc with the fascist lines in counter-thrusts.

The government's resistance was bolstered during the week by the arrival of 2000 seasoned troops from Catalonia and by the timely aid of an international brigade of anti-fascist volunteers. While the rebels still appeared to have retained their edge in artillery fire-power, government planes, excelling the fascist machines in speed if not in number, made a superior showing in air combat. Loyalists found it necessary, however, to dynamite the Franceses bridge in order to throw back fascist columns which General Franco had driven into a frantic assault on the western and northwestern sides of the city.

Polakov

William Green—He will make music

Their growing impotence in open land fighting led the fascists to intensify aerial bombardment of non-combatants, which for the most part they entrusted to foreign airmen, rather than rely on their Spanish fliers. The sheer brutality displayed in fascist air raids engendered fears in Madrid that the enemy contemplated the use of poison gas to force the city into submission. Franco's failure to take Madrid according to schedule proved a snag to the Italo-German plan for recognition of the rebel junta, and the open, unrestrained military aid which would accompany such recognition. Fascist Ramon Franco scurried off to Rome on a secret mission for his brother, and Adolf Hitler, disconcerted by Madrid's successful defense, called a conference of his military aides to consider emergency measures in Franco's behalf.

Loyalists entertained the hope that if the enemy could be held at bay a while longer, Franco's position would become untenable, in view of his scarcity of men and the effect which extended battle might have on the morale of his mercenaries.

WITH Downing Street keeping close watch on Italian movements in Majorca and Spanish Guinea, as well as on Il Duce's preparations for an attack on Catalonia, Dino Grandi, Rome's delegate in the London Committee of Neutrals, tried to allay British fears for the Mediterranean by launching a violent diatribe against the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin. Soviet delegate Kagan countered by noting that Italy was "piping a tune which Berlin had composed" and condoled with Rome for having "yielded her independence of approach in international matters" at Hitler's behest.

Official Britain was far too well informed of Italy's military activities in Spain to be impressed by Grandi's exhibition, and the non-intervention committee absolved the Soviet Union of Italian charges that it had aided Madrid. In a violation of international maritime rules that amounted to piracy, the Spanish fascist cruiser *Almirante Cervera* seized a Soviet oil tanker and held it in Ceuta, Spanish Morocco. While Hearst's cable agencies clamored about the seizure of Soviet "munitions," it was soon definitely established that the ship was actually a tanker taking a consignment of oil to Belgium.

Austria, Hungary, and Italy, parties to the Rome Protocol of 1934, met again in Vienna. In a bid for recognition of his Ethiopian conquest, Mussolini yielded to demands made on him by both Austria and Hungary. To the former he granted trade compensations for the losses it suffered through the devaluation of Italy's lira. To Hungary he offered support in its claims for territorial revision at the expense of the Little Entente countries. While Rome thus gained allies, at least to help press her case with the League of Nations, Berlin seemed to be the main beneficiary of the Vienna meet, for it succeeded in preventing Italy from consolidating its relations with the Little Entente in such a manner as would have set up a counterweight to Nazi influence. As matters stand, Rome is no obstacle to the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, which according to numerous observers is contemplated by Berlin for the coming year.

THAT territorial aggression is next in Hitler's program of "shock politics" was forcibly brought home when the Fuehrer denounced the river clauses of the Versailles treaty, leaving only its territorial clauses now intact. Part XII, Section 2, of the Versailles treaty decreed the internationalization of German rivers in order to provide land-locked Switzerland and Czechoslovakia free access to the sea. It provided for the internationalization of the Kiel Canal, under the administration of Germany, to allow free passage to the vessels of all countries in time of peace or war. A brief *communiqué* from Berlin notified the Powers that Germany no longer recognized its obligations under this clause. And, as if acknowledging its sanction of this and previous Hitlerite coups, London commented that it was "not surprised." For the record, however, Foreign Minister Eden administered a gentle rebuke to Berlin, expressing "regret" that Hitler "should once again have abandoned procedure by negotiation in favor of unilateral action."

In strange contrast to the antics of most of Europe's diplomats was the note struck in Moscow by Soviet Foreign Commissar Litvinov on receiving the Order of Lenin, highest decoration of the Soviet Union. "If bourgeois diplomacy," said Litvinov, "defines a diplomat as a man who lies for the benefit of his fatherland, then a Soviet diplomat is one who tells the truth not only for the benefit of his own country but for the benefit of all working people and all humanity. . . . The struggle of Soviet diplomacy is for peace, and peace is necessary for all humanity."

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Ye Compleat Profession

Rugged individualists who wear no man's collar will see a ready-made future in this new career

By Robert Forsythe

FOR a young man embarking upon a career, I should think he would do well to look into the possibility of becoming a Trotskyist. The work is light, the hours are good, and the rewards are increasing at such a pace that the field is likely to grow crowded. Compared with other lines requiring as little thought, Trotskyism has far outdistanced such professions as stock selling, banking, and quality-magazine editing, which were formerly the best hopes for the young and ambitious.

The cloud hovering over banking and stock broking is slow in rising and it is hardly possible that our time will witness another surge in that direction. Along with financial security the present-day young desire adventure and romance, all of which are included in Trotskyism, and there is slight possibility that they are going to be diverted from a field which offers so many advantages with so little risk.

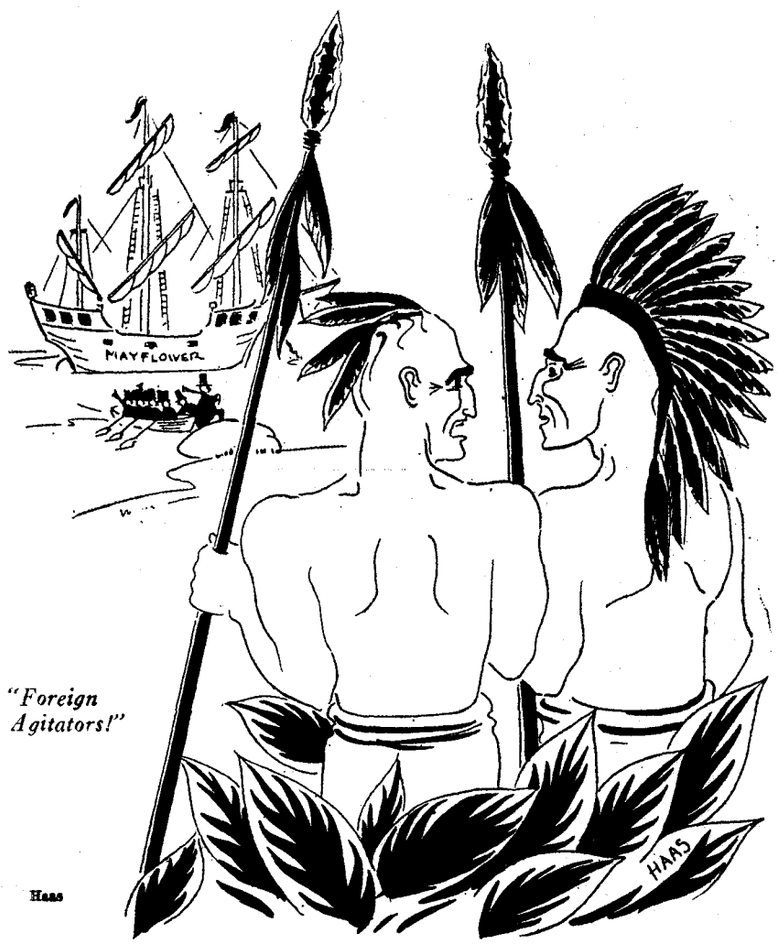
Naturally there are variations even in Trotskyism and I shouldn't have the novice think that he will leap to the side of Mr. Max Eastman and Dr. Sidney Hook after three simple lessons. Indeed I am not even suggesting that such heights can be scaled. But there are innumerable posts available in the lower reaches, and the calls from the New York drawing rooms cannot begin to be met under present conditions. It will be well if the young man is personable and agreeably romantic on his own behalf, but the demand for daring spirits who are more radical than the Reds and more charming than King Edward VIII has created a market for Trotskyists which gives even the lesser prospects a chance.

By some quirk of history the world is ripe for Communists who are not Communists but more communistic than the Communists. As is well known, the Communists called Stalinists are a menace to mankind in the eyes of the good folk who invite the Trotskyists. However, in the eyes of the Trotskyists the Stalinists are the very dishwater of Communism. The thing seems to make no sense but it is an undeniable fact and must be reflected upon by the young men I am addressing. It will not do to rush into the fray without knowing how the land lies. Stalinists are very reactionary Communists who are feared by everybody on Park Avenue. Trotskyists are very violent revolutionaries who are loved by the same people.

The instructions necessary to become a Trotskyist are rudimentary. It is required that one have the Napoleonic complex at least in the embryonic state. After that nothing is needed but a firm conviction that the official Communist Party in any given country is made up of a group of incompetents. In this set of lessons there is a qualification for beginners which permits the thought that while the leaders in America are hopeless, they are much better in Great Britain. The English Trotskyists reverse the procedure, but with that variation the lesson remains standard. At a certain point in the course it is well to learn that the Communists are (a) sectarian or (b) surrendering to the enemy. These maneuvers can be manipulated in such a way as to confound any Stalinist and delight the average upper-class dinner party.

Included in the earlier studies will be a dissertation on the greatness of Adolf Hitler, which comes under the heading of Facing the Facts, and is coupled with an analysis of the Soviet Union, showing that its real talent has been exiled or murdered and the revolution has been thwarted. This goes particularly well with elderly matrons who are sad over the failure of revolution, and not a little angry with Mr. Stalin for his pusillanimity. A bit further along it will be time (a) to insist upon the formation of soviets in all countries, (b) to halt the united-front movement wherever it appears, and (c) to deplore the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union.

With these few fundamental instructions and a dinner jacket, it will be possible for an alert young man to grow with the nation. In the event that his ambitions are literary, he will have his choice of markets. If there is a book on economics or upon the Soviet Union or upon Marxism to be reviewed, he may be certain that it will never be placed in the hands of a friend of the Soviet Union. This would be favoritism. For this reason such books invariably fall to the Trotskyists, who have no interest involved and are much better versed on the Soviet Union than a Stalinist who has merely lived there. In this crusade he will have part in that great change in the book-review section of the Sunday New York *Times,* by which even the White Russians are being made to yield to their betters. There is



"Foreign Agitators!"

Haas

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the further established fact that no Stalinist is able to write and consequently would not be able to do justice to his cause if given the opportunity. Because of this concern for the truth, the Trotskyist may be assured of a welcome equally warm in the ranks of William Randolph Hearst, Mr. Ogden Reid of the New York *Herald Tribune,* Mr. Thomas Lamont of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* and in the *Daily Forward* of Mr. Abraham Cahan, all of whom are eager to know the truth about Russia. The best market, however, will be found in Mr. Wertheim's *Nation,* which maintains a high standard of neutrality provided it is supplied from the proper sources. The field, as can be seen, is wide open and no writer with the slightest concern for his future can overlook the opportunity. The beginner will aid his chances if he perfects a style which shows compassion and understanding for Red Russia along with a firm determination that the truth must be told. This manner is particularly appreciated by liberal editors and brings the highest rates. It is a highly critical method which does not blink the facts and, by its very insistence on the shortcomings of the U.S.S.R., is helping most to bring the light of reason to that lumbering land. By the same reasoning nothing fully good must be admitted about Russia lest the average American reader feel that the writer is prejudiced. By the change in a few words and a general lightening of style the same article can be made available for the *Saturday Evening Post,* which is extremely anxious to present the truth about Russia provided it is the unsullied truth.

The chief topic of conversation for a Trotskyist will be the Comintern and here even the most stupid beginner will have no trouble. Since the departure of Trotsky from Russia, the Comintern has of course done no single right thing and all that is needed in this connection is a weary sad smile and a despairing wave of the hand. In such a simple thing as getting letterheads printed, the Comintern will be bound to go wrong, and when it approaches a problem such as the Island of Gingriz, the errors can mount to a point where the entire revolutionary movement is imperiled. The Island of Gingriz, as is well known, is inhabited by ex-vaudeville actors, and one may imagine the resentment of the Gingriz representatives to the Seventh Congress upon finding that sessions were to start as early as 10 o'clock in the morning, a time comparable to the middle of the night for the Gingrizites. Their withdrawal from the Congress and the resultant effect upon all thespians can easily be realized. It is only one of a myriad of mistakes which could have been avoided with a bit of serious consideration.

In short, the career of a Trotskyist is made to order for rugged individualists who will wear no man's collar. Since the early days of the motion picture, when it was impossible to make a film which would lose money, nothing has arrived which so fully meets all requirements of safety and remuneration. Miniature golf and mah jong passed on almost as soon as they reached their peak, but all indications about Trotskyism point to a solid future. A slight initial investment will bring returns in social favor, feelings of courage, and financial betterment which can scarcely be duplicated in any other line of endeavor. It may very well be the new industry which will bring us definitely out of the depression. If I am not too presumptuous I should like to offer it as my Five Year Plan. I think five years should be about enough.

Bombers Attack

Heavy the metal tears
Of these repressive years
Drop down, rain death down here;
Refuse to mate with earth,
Destroy, renounce rebirth,
Shatter themselves, and kill—
Enforce a desperate will.

Such tears we too must shed
Soon, who review our dead,
Stand gaping, shaking heads—
Weep! We must weep in steel,
Spill burning tears, anneal
Sorrow's alternative,
Toughen ourselves, and live.

VALENTINE ACKLAND.

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Woodcuts by Helen West Heller

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Three Years of It

Looking back to the time when he was one of its hungry editors, the author sees a colorful development of this magazine over the years

By Walt Carmon

I'VE just had four years of running a magazine in a Rolls-Royce. No worry over finances, circulation, or the rent. In Moscow, of course. It isn't being done here —as yet.

After that you can imagine how painful it is to look back to New York of 1929-32. In those days, it wasn't a question of getting out a magazine on a shoestring. Shoestrings were the problem.

Yet we appeared regularly. And in those three years the NEW MASSES publication date was not nearly as elastic as Heywood Broun once said it was for radical publications.

But those were the days of intellectual doldrums. Having quintuplets was a cinch compared to getting out an issue of NEW MASSES. I once wrote how I became a ventriloquist. I'd change my voice each time the phone rang. Whether I was "in" or not depended entirely on whether it was the printer, engraver, the landlord—or a friend.

I was managing editor then. And for six months of the time I was the staff. Editing was a pleasant sideline. I became an expert in floor-sweeping, shipping, bookkeeping, and firing the stove. I could bring tears to the eyes of Joe Cannata, our printer. But let's not talk about this. I lose weight thinking about it.

A. Walkowitz

MIKE GOLD was giving birth to *Jews Without Money*. And ideas on financing to keep us afloat. The book was much better. So were his monthly pieces in the magazine, which was almost a lone voice in the desert that was America.

Today it is hard to believe that we are speaking of only five years ago. The stock market crashed and let loose a few ideas. The John Reed Club was organized in the NEW MASSES office. It proved to be John the Baptist for the League of American Writers, the Artists' Congress, and the unions of professional workers. In those days even Theodore Dreiser was not yet immoralized on a toothpick charge in Kentucky. And meanwhile good friends, usually honest people, swiped stamps from the places they worked in so we could mail out what we so painfully snatched from the reluctant clutches of the printer and engraver.

In those days, when creditors were stepping right on our shirt-tails, Mike Gold and I would sink into vats of gloom. Joe Freeman wasn't cheering either. It was tough to keep one's spirits up. Too many writers were still sitting pretty, W.P.A. were only letters in the alphabet, and revolutions were something that happened in Europe. Sherwood Anderson was running two papers in the sticks, one Democrat, the other Republican. There were no daring young men flying anywhere and Anthony Adverse was Trader Horn.

Only good old John Dos Passos would plop the manuscript of his latest novel on the desk and ask us to pick out any of it. And it was "Dos" who encouraged us to keep on giving a break to Jack Conroy, Bill Rollins, Kenneth Fearing, Jacob Burck, and other young writers, poets, and artists who, crude as their efforts sometimes were, genuinely throbbed with the pulse of America.

Art Young and Maurice Becker, "old Bolsheviks" of art, came with drawings as they had been doing for twenty years, since the old *Masses* of 1911. Joe Freeman, Bill Gropper, Louis Lozowick, Langston Hughes, Josephine Herbst, John Herrmann, and many more never failed us. And then came Dreiser, Nathan Asch, and Sherwood Anderson, among so many others.

We could get a feel of a much livelier pulse in the American intellectual scene. By 1932 the staff had grown to four people. Yet we could not have continued without the encouragement of the daily mail. Hundreds of manuscripts and drawings from young and established writers, poets, and artists all over the country were sufficient proof that the NEW MASSES stirred them to creation. Edward Newhouse, Joseph Kalar, H. H. Lewis, Ed Rolfe, Mitch Siporin, and others brought new vigor. The *Anvil, Partisan, Partisan Review, Blast* and many other magazines came to life and the Left in the footsteps of NEW MASSES.

And always there were those loyal readers: middle class, professionals, workers. In my three years we never appealed in print for money. About twice a year, however, we did appeal to our readers by personal letter. Their loyal support, added to receipts from dances and debates, permitted us to go on.

After all, we did appear regularly. NEW MASSES meant something to increasing numbers of readers, writers, poets, artists. It grew and it helped in crystallizing what is today a healthy cultural movement which includes the best in American literature and art.

The great tradition of the twenty-five years of the *Masses, Liberator,* NEW MASSES simply could not be buried. It had its weaknesses, mistakes, and changes of personnel. It had periods of wages, actual and theoretical. But it went on.

What the hell did we care if Harry Hansen in the New York *World-Telegram* razzed us because we printed on butcher's paper. Or that Mencken (by the way where is he?) or his boy friends took a poke at us. We knew that here was something worth missing an occasional meal for.

Now the NEW MASSES is a weekly. I'm sure they have steam heat now and an editor does not have to know where to get wooden boxes or how to build a fire in a pot-bellied stove. Circulation keeps growing. A new and larger audience is here to receive it. NEW MASSES is an organizing force in the fight against fascism and war as well as an inspiration in the creative field. Yet I know too that after four years as editor in Moscow, I could never again work on the NEW MASSES. I'm afraid I'm too soft now.

But I would never give up the pride of having given three years of humble effort in the continuance of the tradition from John Reed, Bob Minor, Boardman Robinson, and others up to Mike Gold, Joe Freeman, John Dos Passos, Gropper, Gellert, Burck, and the great host of creative workers in whom a great deal of the future of American art and literature lies.

Those were three memorable years. And, to tell the whole truth, I had a much better shape then.

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Three Poems

Verses in varying moods by a world-famous Spanish revolutionary poet, translated by Rolfe Humphries

By Rafael Alberti

These poems are part of a group by several Spanish writers being sent out by the Paris headquarters of the International Congress for the Defense of Culture to raise funds and spread propaganda for the cause of the People's Front government in Spain. A collection of Alberti's poems called "A Spectre Is Haunting Europe" has just been issued by the Critics' Group in a translation by Angel Flores.—THE EDITORS.

REMEMBER ME

My dear, remember me
Far out on the deep sea

When you have left the shore
Where you return no more

When through the sail the squall
Inserts his dusky awl

When on the bridge alone
The captain stands like stone

And when the radio's spark
Dies and the ship goes dark

When the light on the mast
Sinks out of sight at last

Ah, then you well may be
A siren under sea.

A SPECTER IS HAUNTING EUROPE

. . . and the old families close the shutters,
lock themselves in behind the gates,
and the father, in darkness, runs to the bank,
and dreams, in the night, of pile and stake,
dreams, in the night, of herds afire,
that there are flames, instead of corn,
instead of wheat, that there are sparks
and chests of iron full of embers.
Where are you?
Where are you?
They hunt us down, they are armed with guns,
The peasants are marching in our blood.
Who are you?

Close the frontiers, no time to lose, close the frontiers,
See him come, in haste, on the east wind
from the steppes red with famine.
Let the workers not hear his voice,
let his whistle not enter the factories,
let the men in the fields never see his sickle.
Stop him!
For he leaps the seas,
he ranges over all the map,
he hides in the holds of the steamers,
he talks to the oilers and stokers,
he makes them rise, black on the deck,
makes hate and wretchedness arise,
and turns the crew to mutineers.
Open, open the prison doors!
His voice will break against the walls.
Who are you?

But as for us, we follow him,
we bring him, borne on the east wind, down to earth,
ask him about the steppes red with peace and red with triumph,
we seat him at the table of the poor peasant,
present him to the bosses in the factories,
have him take charge of strikes and demonstrations,
we have him talk with soldiers and with sailors,
have him look in on little office-workers,
and lift his fist at the babble in the parliaments of gold and blood.

A specter is haunting Europe,
A specter haunts the world.
We call him—Comrade.

PANAMA

The singer enters the revel,
The singer says he is going to give out the liquor,
The singer gives each one his share.
We're going to use blue glasses,
We're going to use azure glasses,
We're going to use white glasses.
We're going to use foreign glasses come from great far-off cities.
We're going to use foreign blue glasses come from great far-off cities.

(*Song of the Cuna Indians of Panama*)

Yes,
it's been a long time, too long a time,
that here we hear only the ring of foreign glasses,
that the grass here hears the heel and the tongue of foreign shoes,
that the sun here browns the muzzle of foreign guns,
that here two seas join but to buy the cargo of foreign boats,
that the flowers here fade and the boas here sleep only for foreign hands and eyes,
that the dawn comes here, and the breeze grows fresh only to brighten foreign teeth, foreign clubs, and foreign trade.
that here . . .

The time has come for the foreign glasses to lose their resonance in the woods
For the huts at the base of the foreign houses to rise in their pride and beg no more.
For the foreign vessels no more to open the slow locks, raising and lowering the snow of the water,
For the foreign men, not our own, to have blood on the chained land and stolen seas
For . . .

We're going to use our own blue glasses.

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What Price Palaver?

"Diamond Jim" Brady began to pile up a fortune when he was a mere drummer. But today's commission salesmen have a much tougher time turning the trick

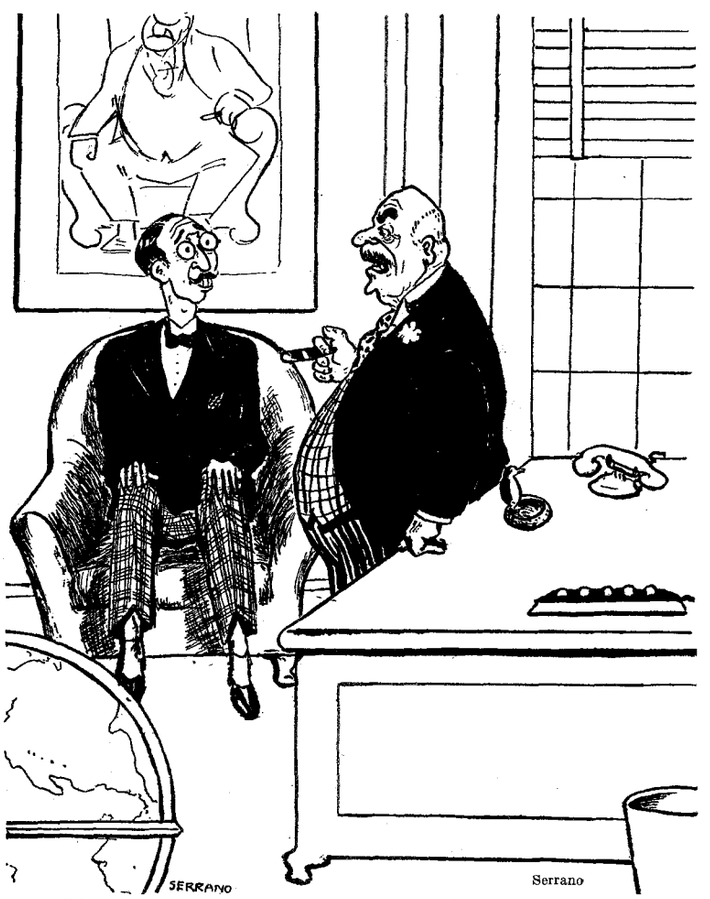
By Malcolm Haskell

FEW figures on the contemporary American economic scene have felt the weight of the fallacies and inadequacies of capitalism more severely than that middle-class unfortunate, the commission salesman.

A veritable jinni, he appears in a thousand different manifestations: the vacuum-cleaner salesman in whose face your wife slammed the door just this morning, the magazine solicitor whom you threw out of your office yesterday when he tried to sell you a bargain combination of *Liberty* and *Cosmopolitan,* the coal salesman who must split his commissions with the receiver of the apartment building in which you live or miss the sale, and of course the insurance "counselor" who so sagaciously has been urging you to create an estate for your loved ones. Then there are the innumerable salesmen and "commercial travelers" that are never seen or met by the consuming public, the thousands upon thousands who call upon jobbers, distributors, and other middle-men. And again the thousands more who, temporarily out of employment, become ephemeral independent business men, purchasing various notions or household appliances to be carried but rarely sold in the weary trudge from office to office or house to house.

Means of existence for this army of over one and a half million Americans is entirely contingent upon the luck of each day's striving. Overlooked even in the deceased N.R.A. codes, when General Johnson *et al.* planned to create the abundant life for all American toilers, they plod despondent, disorganized, and—most unfortunately—declassed.

Expanding capitalism furnished many illustrations of successful salesmen from which the generations that came of age in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth might derive inspiration. Didn't "Diamond Jim" Brady, a mere drummer, start his fortune in huge commissions from the sale of Fox trucks for railroad cars? Wasn't there somebody in Chicago named Kemper who yearly sold $50,000,000 worth of insurance for which he regularly received an annual commission check for $5,000,000? And for those who thought only in terms of a decent weekly income, there was always the phantom of Mr. R—— of Iowa, who made $20 the first day he went into selling the newly patented McStab Mechanical Can-Opener.



"Sell your charm, Prince, our bonds will sell themselves."

That you could get rich much quicker selling than laboring appeared obvious to that generation. Labor's pittance was limited to the meager wages allotted and standardized by the Robber Barons, but at least in the early days of capitalist development the glib-tongued boys were not so inhibited. Salesmanship, that was the best road to success. From the cradle to the grave one was always a salesman, our learned leaders taught, in business, in love, in domestic affairs, *sell yourself* first. There was gold in them thar sales. All you apparently needed was a confident fluency, a good item, and unexploited territory. "Methods of salesmanship, like those predominant in production, finance, and the development of natural resources . . . reflected the trend toward exploitation characteristic of the past century."[1]

During what Westbrook Pegler calls "the era of wonderful nonsense," salesmanship as a pseudo-science and bastard "profession" reached its peak. In the United States in 1870 there were approximately two and a half million engaged in the manufacturing and mechanical industries and a little over one hundred thousand in every type of salesmanship including clerks in stores—or one salesperson to twenty-five factory workers. By 1900 the proportion had increased to one salesperson to each seven and a half mechanical and manufacturing workers, and by 1920, to one salesperson for approximately every six and three-quarters factory workers. The official 1930 census indicated astounding changes in these statistical relationships:

Total persons gainfully employed in manufacturing and mechanical industries	13,790,000
Salespeople and clerks in stores	2,377,000
Commercial travelers	224,000
Real Estate and Insurance agents	526,000
Total	3,127,000

So at the time of our last census there was one salesperson to each four and one-half factory workers.[2]

What person of sound memory can forget those glorious days of wonderful prosperity when everybody and his brother were salesmen? Bookkeepers, taxi drivers, elevator operators, and high-school boys sold exclusive suburban lots from subdividers' "boiler rooms." Profound college graduates of twenty-two were selling good, safe, conservative securities to lawyers representing trust estates. Undergraduates preparing for notable careers as bond salesmen were working their way through college selling magazine subscriptions. Lads quit high school in the junior [illegible] wholesaler, retailer, or to consume[illegible] razor blades, washing machines, automobiles, neckties, radios, electric refrigerators, or scorecards at ball games. A line and "a line"—nothing else mattered.

Books and treatises on salesmanship and

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[1] *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.* The Macmillan Co. Vol. XIII, page 521.

[2] All statistics from *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (McGraw-Hill Book Company), compiled by the President's Research Committee, Chapter VI, "Shifting Occupational Patterns," by Ralph G. Harlen, Russell Sage Foundation, and Meredith B. Givens, Social Science Research Council.

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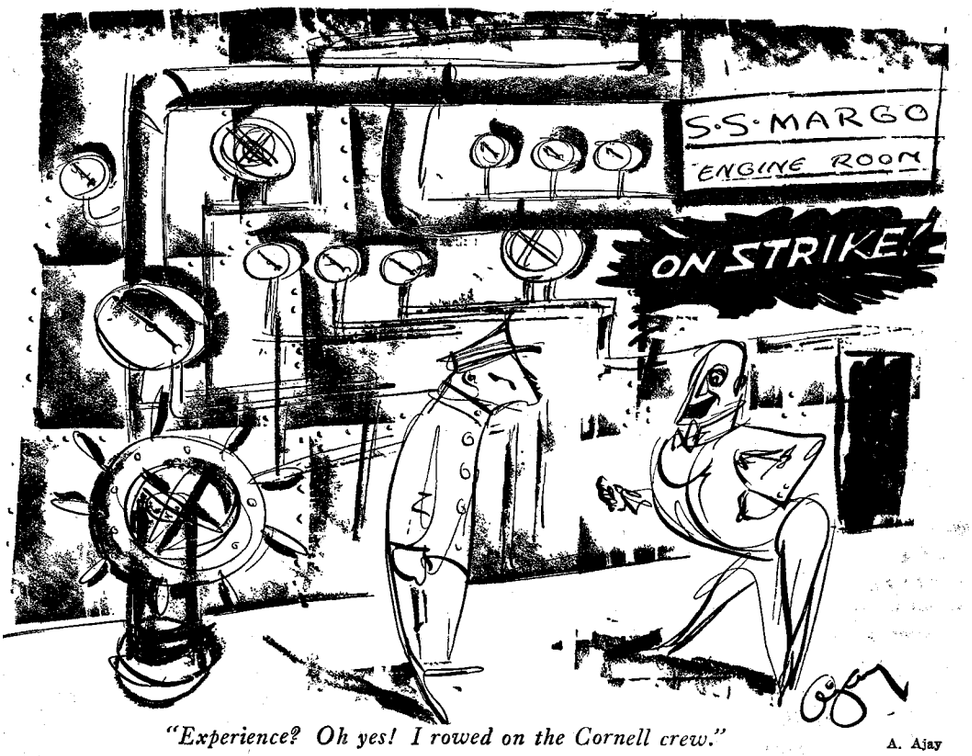
sales psychology were manifold. *Letters That Land Orders* was a best-seller. The erudite Walter Dill Scott contributed an article to the *Encyclopædia Americana* proclaiming the value of theoretical psychology in practical salesmanship, exhibiting conclusively the infinite value of a college education. Books of "canned" sales talks showing how to meet every display of sales resistance by the "prospect" were numerous. Every single word from "Good morning, Mr. Smith" to "Thank you for your order, Mr. Smith, it is pleasure to serve you." A career in a book. The toughest job appeared to be banking the golden commissions.

THEN came a certain sad October and this distorted system together with its companion evil of instalment buying reached an inevitable collapse. The men who had adopted salesmanship as a calling, along with most other Americans who had full faith in the ability of the Great Engineer to square the circle, commenced to wait for prosperity to round that corner. They're still waiting—waiting for those glorious days when everybody was a salesman's pushover for everything from a sewing machine to a mausoleum vault.

But in the meantime the landlord must be paid and the wife and kids must eat. A front must be maintained: the car simonized, collar and tie be immaculate — look the least bit frayed and you never make a sale. So the salesman drifts, not knowing his destiny, peddling, piddling from one high-pressure proposition to another with recurring cycles of enthusiasm and despair like the text-book picture of a manic-depressive. No matter what he sells, he must confidently represent himself as an authority on his line.

Two examples are typical. Since 1931 an acquaintance of mine has successively sold on drawing account and commission the following commodities, each for a different concern: dry goods, ladies' purses, spats, subdivision lots, vacuum cleaners, groceries, wines, whiskies, wines again, subdivision lots again, and now lumber and roofing. A total of eleven jobs in five years, in eight quite unrelated fields. When he left each job he owed his employer money because his commissions never equaled the stipulated drawing account.

Another acquaintance has sold since 1934: book-club memberships, classified advertising for two different newspapers, automatic furnaces, newspaper subscriptions, collections, and magazine research [illegible] selling air-conditioning [illegible] The [illegible] arrangement that either of these men could secure was a sixty-dollar-a-week drawing account against commissions while on the road, out of which he was compelled to pay all traveling expenses including car, meals, and hotels. For most traveling salesmen today the expense account is a jaded myth along with the fat [illegible]'s daughter. The choicest city selling jobs they could find offered a thirty-dollar weekly drawing account against commissions, all car expenses to be borne by the salesmen. However, the vast majority of selling jobs offer no such inducements.



"Experience? Oh yes! I rowed on the Cornell crew." A. Ajay

Actual unemployment is not a problem for men with sales experience. Examination of the want-ad section of any metropolitan newspaper will show that there are from three to five times as many commission selling jobs offered as all other types of employment combined. The turnover in jobs of this caliber is tremendous. Most newcomers undertake their work with enthusiasm and exuberance, but its enervating character soon leaves them spent and again searching the ads for a new line. Employers seem to profit by these constant changes in sales personnel, because they are thus permitted to exploit an ever-replenished group of ardent, aggressive tyros who give their all for dear old profits, by selling the item at least to their relatives and friends. It matters little to an employer if he has fifty salesmen in a field normally covered by ten. Since the men are working at their own risk and expense, his general overhead is increased only minutely, while his chances for expansion by intensive selling are greatly enhanced.

BUT WHAT if, by a rare stroke of luck, one of these men should strike a nugget?

Let us assume that by overwhelming persistence a salesman takes a new item into new territory and extends its distribution far beyond his employer's fondest expectations. As soon as the product or service is established and commissions consistently exceed what might be termed a reasonable salary, the aggressive, pioneering salesman, having completed his necessary function, will be discharged and replaced by a competent order-taker at a clerk's salary.

Our present industrial setup offers little hope for these men and women. They cannot beat its loaded dice. Except for the few whose engineering and scientific training enables them to demonstrate and sell technically complex equipment and processes, the commission salesmen exist as a group trained for nothing but mere palaver. Without trade, craft, or profession, broken and betrayed by the false promises, the glitter, and tinsel of capitalism, they drift helplessly in the seas of middle-class social and political confusion.

TO KEEP these uprooted legions from the fascist ranks is a major task of this generation. They are in a receptive mood for the "shot in the arm" fascism will offer. A specious self-respect, inspired by uniforms, claptrap, and emotional appeals proclaiming their power, authority, and great destiny under fascism, can easily become attractive to a desperate group without social understanding. "Thus they [the so-called middle classes] become easy prey for the demagogic propaganda of finance-capital to give them a sham 'revolutionary' lead . . . and organize them as a counter-force against the working class in contradiction to their own interests." [3]

Working class and anti-fascist organizations must make a determined effort to enlist this bewildered multitude. The fascist mirage must be properly interpreted for them before it makes its illusory appearance. An intensive program is required to give them orientation and direction. They must be taught the truth concerning their one and only hope for social and economic stability—alignment with the working-class movement and full participation in the building of the road leading to the newly ordered society where such large-scale human maladjustment will be rendered impossible.

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3 *Fascism and Social Revolution,* by R. Palme Dutt. International Publishers. Page 521.

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No Crops; No Relief

Ruined by the drought and out-maneuvered by the landlord, the sharecropper demands that the government take a hand

By Clyde Johnson

SUPPOSE you had sloshed around in the muddy fields of Alabama or Georgia last February and March trying to plow your land and get it ready for planting. Suppose you had seen the rains stop and a blistering sun start to bake the soggy red clay. Suppose you had waited for those first little sprouts of cotton to come up, and then found in some fields only one sprout every thirty or fifty feet in a row. In some sections of the South, mainly in the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, and eastern Alabama, between twenty-five to seventy-five percent of the crop was ruined.

The cry for drought relief sounded from the lips of thousands of stricken farmers. A few months ago, the Washington officials toured the South and promised relief. The liberal Mr. Tugwell said that not a family would starve because of drought destruction. Evidently Tugwell's lieutenants did not hear him.

In a letter dated July 25 addressed "To the drought-stricken farmers of Tallapoosa County," the county supervisor of the Resettlement Administration told the farmers where and when to apply for relief. In conclusion he wrote, "It will be necessary for landlords to sign with tenants where the tenant applies for drought aid."

You might think this means the nice supervisor wants the nice paternal landlords to help the poor, illiterate tenants get relief. That's not the case. The cotton is light and hard to pick. Rows are filled with grass which came with the late rains. The landlords want a gang of half-starved sharecroppers and tenants to pick cotton at reduced wages, and to get this labor done on their own terms, the landlords starve the croppers into it.

If you don't believe croppers are starving or in need of drought relief, the Share Croppers' Union has countless letters from the farms to prove the desperate need. A white sharecropper in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, writes:

I will get about three bales of cotton out of twenty-five acres I planted [normal would be ten bales—C. J.] and about forty bushels of corn out of eight acres [normal would be about 240 bushels—C. J.]. When the county agent sent word to come and sign up for drought relief, I went and signed up. I ain't heard a word from it yet. I am barefooted and naked. I can't send my children to school. I ain't got nothing and can't get nothing. And my union brothers is in the same shape too.

H. M.

Another writes:

—— lives on Claude Milner's place. He [Milner] received a letter from the Drought Relief to fill out blanks so the sharecroppers could get relief. He said he didn't need it and could live without it. He don't care if his croppers starve. He wants them to cut stove wood at 50 cents a cord, ready for the stove.

From Chambers County, Alabama, a Negro widow writes:

I live on the T. Tucker plantation. My mother and children (3) and myself are hungry. So we are just here starving, with no job, no food, no clothing and nothing to go on. So I am pleading, if there is any way you can help me, please do so.

A farmer from Lafayette County, Mississippi, described the trick a county agent pulled on him and other farmers: to have them grow watermelons in large quantities and then discover that there is no market for the melons. He wrote of the drought:

With other crops cut 50 percent and more due to the drought, with no hay, cow feed selling at $2.60 a sack and other things as high in proportion, and on top of all that, getting only 50 cents a hundred for picking cotton, thousands of farmers are facing starvation.

A white farmer in Louisiana complained:

I investigated crop conditions of the hill country of Natchitoches, Sabine, and Vernon parishes and found that yields are far short of the 1935 crop. Many farmers claim the cotton crop will not be more than a half yield and in many cases much less. The corn crop is far short of 1935.

A Negro tenant farmer from St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, wrote:

We need relief. We got to have relief. We got no corn to raise a hog or a chicken and no corn to feed our mules. There is no corn to go to the mill to grind corn into meal for our own family.

These are not isolated grievances. The writers of the above letters are members of local unions with memberships ranging from fifteen to a hundred apiece. And these are but a very few of the letters received.

If relief is not given to the sharecroppers and tenants soon, the first wave of winter weather will strike thousands of them with colds and flu from undernourishment, and, in many cases, with pneumonia. This happened last winter. Hundreds will die of disease intensified by starvation. Many will be evicted

H. M.

from their broken-down hovels for non-payment of debts.

The government dare not neglect these definite needs of the farmers. Drought relief must go directly to all day-laborers, sharecroppers, and tenants who are in need of such help, and should not pass through the hands of the landlords or be dependent upon the landlords in any way. Landlord control of relief must be stopped, for the merits of the sharecroppers' cases cannot be questioned. The fair way is to deal with each applicant according to the merits of his case.

The Share Croppers' Union, with 12,110 members, has met the crisis with basic demands. Mortgage foreclosures, the union contends, must be stopped at once and another moratorium declared on such debts. Moreover, livestock, tools, and equipment must not be confiscated for debts. Feed and seed loans should be canceled or extended, and the debts of sharecroppers and tenants should at the same time be canceled on the ground that the landlords have robbed the croppers and tenants too thoroughly already. A system of crop loans must be prepared by the government so that all croppers, tenants, and small farmers can get a start next spring. In addition, a system of crop insurance, supported by taxes on the exorbitant profits of the cotton and grain-exchange brokers, on corporations dealing in agricultural products or substitutes, and on bankers, shou[illegible]e immediately instituted. The farmer
weather; he must be pr
hazards and crop f
Farmers who n
pay for crop i
financing such
doom the government's plan t[illegible]

The needs of the farmers are known. It is more than rain that they need. Roosevelt, Wallace, and Tugwell know that farmers need relief, but they are reluctant to antagonize the landlords. But the men who by their work feed and clothe America have a right to live. It is to answer these needs that the Share Croppers' Union is waging its present fight.

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Thanksgiving, 1936

THERE will be a lot of windy guff in the next few days surrounding the traditional American festival of thanksgiving. Most of it will follow the timeworn pattern of urging us, the people, supposedly on the passive receiving end, to be grateful for whatever the powers—rulers, fates, heaven, or whatnot—have decided to dish out. In the midst of this palaver, the NEW MASSES offers as its thanksgiving text the old saw that heaven helps them that help themselves.

The recent announcement of pay increases, for example, by such outfits as U. S. Steel, du Pont, General Motors will be referred to in press and pulpit as things that have come to the American workman from on high, and for which he should be duly grateful. "Don't bite the hand. . . ." We say it's spinach. The rulers of American industry, after their somewhat jolting ride on what they mistakenly thought was the Landon bandwagon riding hell-for-leather toward fascism, have not suddenly turned philanthropic. One of the most powerful factors in suddenly changing their tune was the spectacle of a sweeping victory at the polls for what their own spokesmen declared was a class point of view. Another was the steady drive of the C.I.O. unions. Without a fascist mass base, and without their own tool in the White House, the reactionary masters of American capitalism see clearly that at the present moment they must make concessions or yield their rule. Even so, the concessions are microscopic when contrasted with the melon cut for rich shareholders.

The measure of their disinterest in the welfare of the American workingman was the proposal by the U. S. Steel-owned Carnegie-Illinois corporation to peg wage-scale fluctuations to the cost-of-living index at the present ratio. To anyone who is familiar with the life conditions of steel workers, or who knows that according to U.S. government standards of the American people live in dwellings
an habitation, the effort to freeze wage
ratio to the commodity index appears
trial balloon to determine whether
work to prevent the American peo-
economic and political maturity—
to industrial unions and from using
al farmer-labor party to press for
extension of democratic rights.

We *have* a right to be thankful for some things. We can be thankful that the reactionaries cannot control the government; they can be thankful that they have failed to proceed politically along a *clear-cut* class line; they can be thankful that American capital is on the defensive and yielding certain positions. But the American people should remember when they give thanks this week they have only their own organized power to thank for these things—and that the same power, when fully awakened, can win them anything they choose to ask.

Peace in the Americas

THE danger of war in South America emanates most seriously from the rivalry between British and North American imperialist interests. It is now widely conceded that these interests caused the Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay, and at the present the rivalry is by no means dormant. The projected discussion of treaties for peaceful settlement of disputes offers delegates to the Buenos Aires conference an opportunity for producing a regional understanding which would render the outbreak of such wars far more difficult in the future. But such a regional understanding can be valid as a peace instrument only if it reinforces world peace, only if it is based on the principle already recognized by Mexico, that *peace is indivisible.*

The mandate given the President on November 3 also expressed the strong desire of the electorate for effective peace action. To undermine the Covenant of the League of Nations at Buenos Aires and make of the Inter-American Conference just another venture to further the domination of the United States in Latin America at the expense of its imperialist rivals, would mean to ignore that mandate.

Denunciations by government spokesmen of the powers which are instigating war have been lacking neither in number nor in vehemence. And no least of these was the recent statement of our own Secretary of State:

> It is a . . . bitter experience for the whole company of nations, to witness not only the spirit but the letter of international agreements violated with impunity and without regard to the simple principles of honor.

Nevertheless, in its actual conduct of foreign policy, the administration has done little to help put an end to the state of affairs which it condemns so eloquently. It has clung to a conception of neutrality which does not distinguish between an aggressor nation and its victim and, despite Wilson's experience in the last war, has predicated American policy on the assumption that peace and security are attainable for this country without regard to the state of affairs in the rest of the world. Accordingly, while the belligerent Powers have been clearing the way for a world conflagration through their exploits in Ethiopia, the Rhineland, and Spain, the support of the United States has been withheld from the nations which are trying to erect collective safeguards for peace.

Present forecasts about the attitude which this country's delegation will assume at the Inter-American Conference in Buenos Aires are not edifying to those who look forward to our increased coöperation with world peace forces. The *New Republic's* Washington commentator writes that "the administration, abetted by the government of Argentina, hopes to run the League of Nations out of this hemisphere." The international effect which the weakening of the League at Buenos Aires would have may be readily surmised. The further disintegration of the League as a collective peace instrument would augment the danger of an international conflict, from which the United States would scarcely be able to hold aloof. In Europe, satisfaction with such a policy could be derived only by those Powers which have found the League of Nations a hindrance to their warlike ambitions.

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READERS' FORUM

Teachers in Wisconsin and in general—Answering a criticism—Felicitations

● Although I am by no means a veteran teacher—I have taught for only two years and am now teaching for a third and last, I hope—I have attended two sectional conventions at Eau Claire and Superior in 1934 and 1935 and now have made unpleasant observations regarding the recent state convention in session November 5, 6, and 7 at Milwaukee. At this meeting, as at the others, I was able to discover in part, at least, what the attitude of the teacher is in general and what line the leaders in the state prefer to take regarding vital issues.

Unlike a few of my fellow workers, I came without illusions, thanks to meager after-school readings of Marxist literature and thanks to the letters from a friend who is a member of the Communist Party and so constantly on the alert with his criticisms of current issues. If I came without illusions, I left the same, returning to the business of teaching composition and literature with a determination, at the suggestion of this same Marxist friend, to explain a situation which I haven't, unfortunately, seen discussed in your current literature and which, therefore, needs atention from you who have the correct approach to life problems.

The teacher as an individual is scarcely worth saving as she is oftentimes silly and vain about her position. The fact that she is almost completely cut off from real life situations except for her recreation, which is apt to be furiously taken because of the countless repressions of a nun-like existence, only contributes to her helplessness in meeting life as she should—as a worker interested in economics, politics, and social relationships. These she is denied by training and environment. She works alone and is often exhausted at the end of the day. Soon she loses contact with the world outside and becomes indistinguishable in the midst of dead book learning.

Since pedagogues are so illy equipped, imagine if you can what a state convention with its list of petty noblemen in the inner circle of education can effect by its suggestions and insinuations. You see these life-starved automatons sitting and gabbling around you by the thousands, trying to slough off the months of work and worry. They are ready for a good time, impatient of speakers, and most inattentive. "To live a little and fast is all we can hope for," they think to themselves. Very humanly they are not concerned with others. Actually they can sit through lies and never protest because they are not aware of the fact that an untruth has been said. You see all this and realize for the first time how crucial this matter is of forcing the teacher out of her lethargy engendered by her inactivity. You understand that a significant issue is at stake and that if you don't go to the teacher, persuasively informing her, she will never come to you. She dosn't even know that you exist except when she hears vague reports of the Red menace.

Now if a Wisconsin teacher attended the state convention she no doubt swallowed without a second thought a few statements by the former president of the W.E.A., Frances Jelinek, who said, in introducing one of the main speakers, that our problem, to conserve the pupil in school, must necessarily cope with the depression; that the boy and girl today must be taught to face the problem of the next depression which is inevitable. Didn't it occur to her that the problem is not how to meet the next depression, but rather how to prevent it? Had she forgotten all that she had read in the stock psychologies in college about the danger of defeat complexes? Did she believe in her well-fed security that she could go on teaching boys and girls that the only way to weather hard times was to accept blindly and hope everlastingly? Did she forget that the duty of a teacher—according to those same psychologies—is to teach students to face the facts and not take them in blind faith? Was her sermon of accepting life, as bad as it is, not a selfish wish to keep her position, dependent upon present society, at the cost of the future? And has she not committed an unforgivable error in speaking so candidly to those gullible thousands who listened? She is foolish enough to blind herself to the fact that we are yet in a depression and believe that those now old will never see another depression. Perhaps she is right if she means that she and her kind mean to drag out affairs until the old ones are dead.

All this would scarcely excite a thinking person if its implications involved only the teacher. Let her go as an individual, but for safety's sake, save her as a class! She is worth saving, for she teaches your children! Louis Mann, one of the speakers, recognized the fact very clearly and used this knowledge to drive home very pointedly the fact (very important to him) that the American teacher bears a heavy responsibility—that of keeping the student safe in the middle way. He means to yoke teachers for his purposes, and he is wise to flatter them with his attentions, for upon the teachers very much does depend. They have the youth under their tutelage a greater part of the day and if they happen to be a particularly strong class, they are all the more powerful for good or bad as we understand it. In their pupils they inculcate ideas—some remembered long after the teacher is forgotten. What the teacher accepts, students blindly believe to be law. The pity is that the teacher has seldom learned to face the facts and can scarcely, as a consequence, be a model worth patterning after.

What does all this mean? Simply this: teachers in this state of Wisconsin have been urged to accept the economic mess and prepare their students to weather the next. They are given a survey of the difficulties they face—but isn't it odd that no one mentions causes? Or if he does that he is adjudged among the lost Russians? Scarcely when one considers that education is a commodity to be bartered like anything else. I don't hesitate to believe that teachers in thousands are hearing these bits of advice as representing the epitome of the educational attitude towards conditions. They will accept—and your problems of informing the masses becomes one of colossal proportions, for this psychology of defeat indoctrinated in youth has stood greatly in your way in the past. The educators in Wisconsin through their handmaidens propose to make it block your way in the future. CHRISTINE LYTELL.

"Pretty Boy's" Class

● I should like to call attention to what seems to me awkward thinking in Mr. Tom Kromer's review of my book *Pretty Boy*. [Nov. 10 issue.]

A "Pretty Boy," Mr. Kromer says, "must have qualities that identify him with his class. Bank robbers run to type. . . ." J. Edgar Hoover reasons this way, but a NEW MASSES contributor should be more careful in his use of the word "class." Bank robbers no more "run to type" than do preachers, novelists, or reviewers. I did not attempt to make out a case for Dillinger and "Baby Face," nor even for "Pretty Boy" in his role of *bank robber*.

But I do know that there are thousands of law-abiding Oklahomans belonging to "Pretty Boy's" *class* who mourn him, and J. Edgar Hoover could not explain that to save his neck. If my book is unconvincing to Mr. Kromer that is my fault, but if these folks who knew "Pretty Boy" best were convinced before the book was written—that is something for my reviewer to think about. Maybe life itself is unconvincing to him.

I wrote about a farm boy who was made into a bank robber and kept certain "qualities that identify him with his class." WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM.

American Correspondents Wanted

● I should like some American correspondents: because I am trying to get a perspective on the huge American scene; because this might be a humble beginning in using the vast machinery of the Universal Postal Union to knit together the international people's front; and because it would be fun. In 25 years I have seen a little of the world, having lived in London, Sydney, and Auckland, New Zealand, but of your continent I know only the banks of the Panama Canal. My address is 35 Hinemoo Rd., Auckland, New Zealand.

ALWYN MCLEOD.

Greetings on Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

I JOIN gladly in the greetings which will come to you in a mighty flood of acclamation on this occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your great paper.

I remember clearly those days when your paper was born and did that early work which constitutes one of the proudest pages in the history of American journalism. One can still feel the thrill of that exciting time, and the inspiration of that valiant company of editors and artists who kindled and held high a new flame of liberty. Then came troublous days. The paper shared the experience of turmoil and tragedy which swept down upon the world. But with the post-War period there came new life, a rebirth of energy and idealism, and the NEW MASSES seems today as vigorous as its progenitor, *Masses*.

I count it a remarkable thing that a new group of editors and artists should have arisen to match the old. This is an hour of crisis, and vaster crises lie on before. No man of us all knows what a day or an hour may bring forth. It lifts the heart to see the light which you are holding high in the darkness of this time. Questions of agreement and disagreement on matte[illegible]cular opinion appear insignificant as one [illegible]s the glow of your enthusiasm and feels the spirit of your devotion. Your vision is clear and your courage high, and I rejoice in your unflagging leadership.

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE

NEW MASSES is the most popular magazine at Commonwealth College. Greetings from the students and teachers of this southern labor school on your 25th anniversary.—Charlotte Moskowitz, *Executive Secretary*.

ELMER RICE

AS A veteran contributor to the NEW MASSES and its predecessors, I hope that it will long continue its good work in bringing vital economic and social issues to the attention of the American public.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Faulkner and destruction—Patronesses, propagandists, and poets—Pegler and Priestley

THE difference between Wiliam Faulkner and most American novelists suggests the difference between a character and a type. Whether he attracts or repels us, his individuality and its vision, his world and its tonality are complete enough, and his identity firm enough, to evoke response. All the more unfortunate it is that, though his gifts and importance are unquestionable, he seems quite unable to realize himself in a truly significant work.

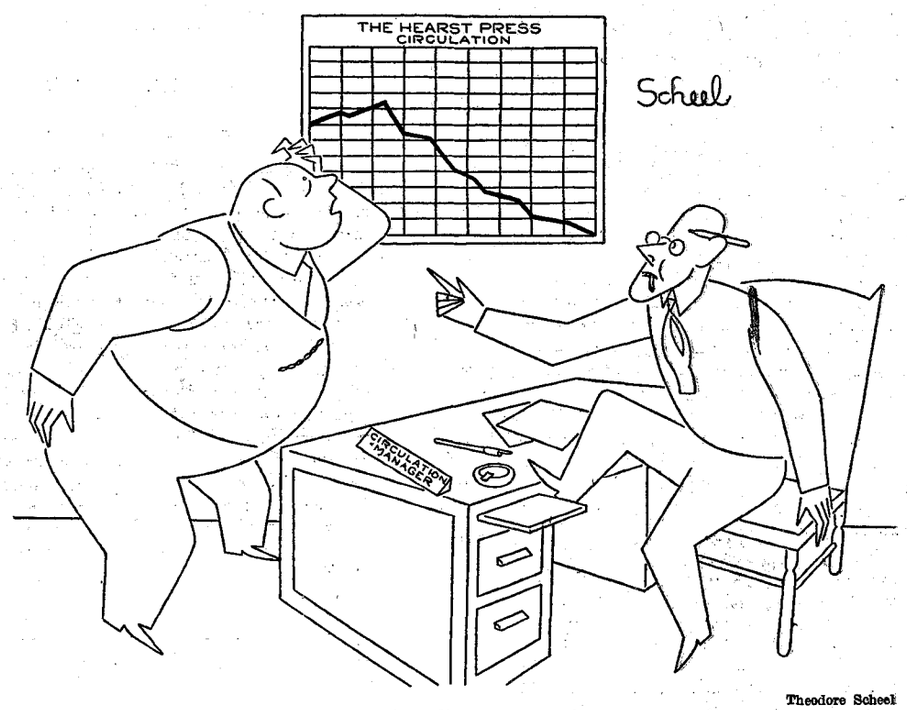
To my mind, Faulkner's new book (*Absalom, Absalom!* Random House. $2.50.) demonstrates once again the gap between his talent and its realization. He is influencing our awareness of the range and variety of the modern novel without, however, affecting its direction or power in the shaping of ideas and attitudes. What he feels and knows he renders in the deep terms of an imagination of the first intensity; all the more formidable and menacing, then, become the weight and pressure of the manifold things, crucial and charged with illumination, that he knows not and perhaps cannot even grasp but that are essential to his full understanding of the world he has been impelled to create. Moreover, that understanding which his conception had refused to integrate and make his own perforce attaches itself to him, even if only as his Nemesis. Denied access in the light of day, it reappears in the dark of night, now no longer open-eyed but sightless. Herewith we touch one source, at least, of the sinister suspense and horror that pervade his pages. The very surplus of uniqueness in him is but the mask of his solitude and of his limitations. Hemmed in by his own consciousness, he beats his fists against its walls, finding a forced release only in violence and melodrama. But what needs to be clearly understood here is that Faulkner's plight does not so much reveal a private failing in aptitude or temperament as a type of creative frustration not uncommon to American literary history. Within this stre[illegible]ork represents a subtle and ir[illegible] ramification, steeped in and formed [illegible] special sectional background, of the way[illegible] which the mind and art of the American intellectual mirrors the dissolution of an old order of values.

In his new novel Faulkner again immerses himself in the destructive element. But this time he is bending its fury into the very heart of that theme towards which he has been beating his way through all his preceding books, and which, in a sense, can now be regarded as his medium of preparation for the supreme effort to come. It is as if the life of the Old South, deep and dead, is so sacred and meaningful to him that he could not have trusted himself at it ere he had rehearsed its parts in more recent locales and on less worthy subjects. With the dear anguish of the past as his trophy, he has used the contemporary world, as it were, merely as his running start.

The rise and catastrophic end of a plantation family, the Civil War, the defeat that peopled the ravaged land with "garrulous outraged baffled ghosts" whose fear and pride and glory you live and breathe, a thing that you, the outsider, cannot understand, for "you would have to be born there"—all this is the classic avowal and exhortation of the peculiar trauma induced by the heritage of the Confederate South. The old ghost-times come to life in a tide of events and emotions and in men and women as peculiar to Faulkner as the Karamazovs to Dostoevsky. Tom Sutpen, who bursts out of the wilderness to father a domain and a race, his son, Henry, the incestuous lovers Judith and Charles, the illicit drop of Negro blood in the family swirling and boiling till it rises like the very flood of fate to engulf the scene of crime and evil and single insane purpose—all placed within the pattern of an imagination as absolute and exacting as any in modern fiction.

Only, the book actually makes dull reading. What has happened is that his pattern and imagery have been impaired and dispersed by an unsuccessful method of presentation. This method, however, has not been arbitrarily chosen; and the clue, I think, lies in the language, which is formal, prolix, tortuous, running over into passages of psychological theorizing that arrest the dramatic development. In a writer who depends so much on drama to carry him forward, anything that blocks the dramatic movement is bound to disintegrate his structure. The language, in its turn, is shaped by a narrative form that, instead of recreating the story for the reader, laboriously pieces it together and interprets it for him through several narrators who all speak in the same voice, the monotonous and sorrowful voice of the author's contemplation of his world. The material is not explored objectively to provide the vision; it is manipulated to illustrate and fit the vision, which is preconceived. Thus the language becomes a function of the author's metaphysics, of spiritual relations, and of reverie: it no longer sticks to the object, but to the author's idea of the object. And as Eliot once observed, language can only be healthy when it directly presents the object, when "it is so close to the object that the two are identified"; otherwise it becomes morbid and unreal.

The form this narrative takes suggests that Faulkner is following the itinerary of an ideological dream, rather than that of history. And since to him the historic process is a mystery of human fate doomed by a "sickness somewhere at the prime foundation of this factual scheme," his reproduction of this process in creative terms is always in danger of degenerating into mystification, is ever on the brink of the dilettantism of horror. It is at this point that his actual qualities as a novelist are directly penetrated by his ideology, whose matrix, it seems to me, is to



Theodore Scheel

"Even the kids don't believe the comics any more!"

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be located in his tortured consciousness of the defeat of the Old South and the annihilation of its way of life. But inasmuch as on this and other grounds he implicitly rejects the industrial civilization that replaced the Old South, and at the same time his mind still runs absolutely counter to materialist ideas, the final sum of his thought is a kind of social despair distended to hold the scheme of things entire. And the best symbol I can think of to represent the bond that ties him to the South he so desperately loves and hates is the very symbol he has himself inscribed into his novel. That symbol is incest. For is not Faulkner's relation to his incestuous lovers, and to the land whose agony they bear, as sterile and desolate, though at times inspired by the grandeur of defiance and death, as their relation among themselves?

PHILIP RAHV.

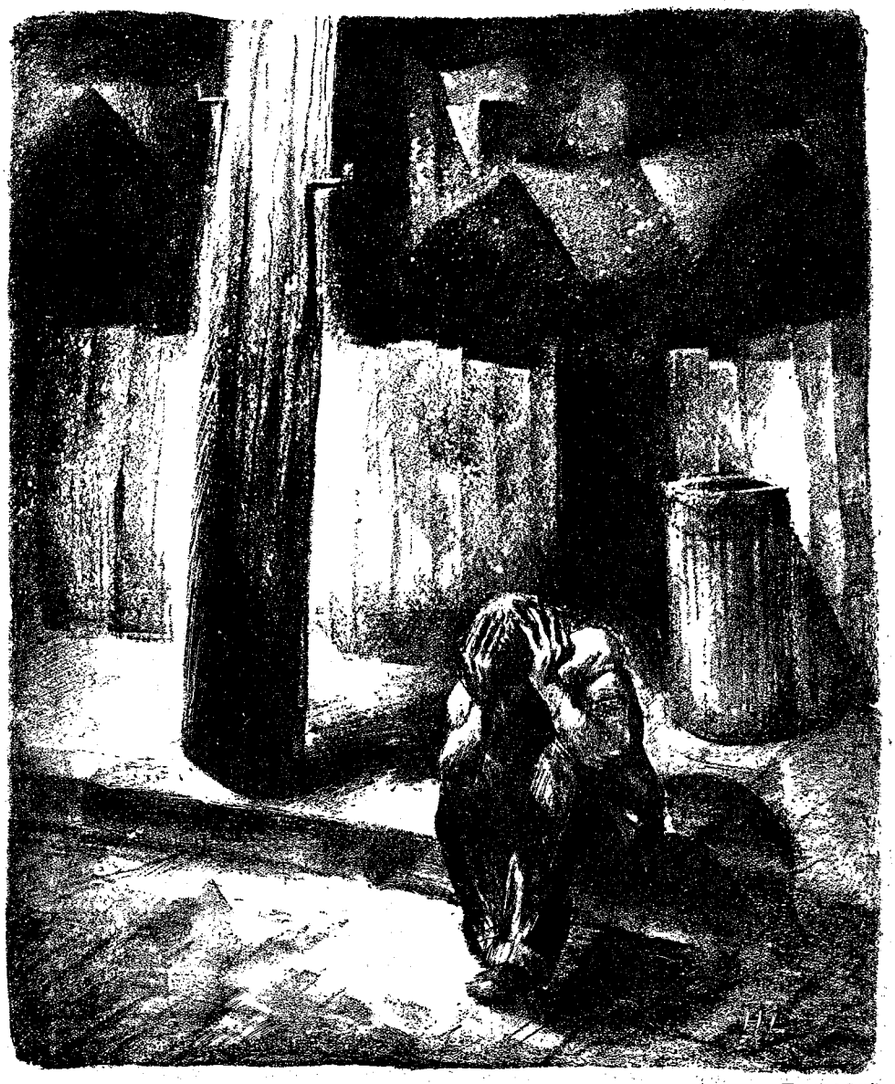
Portrait of a Patroness

MOVERS AND SHAKERS, *by Mabel Dodge Luhan. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $5.

MABEL DODGE came back to America, sobbing to her son, "It is *ugly* in America. We have left everything worth while behind us. America is all machinery and money-making and factories. It is ugly, ugly, ugly." She took an apartment and started buying old glass. She would catch its gleam from her speeding car, and "rush in and buy it, breathlessly impatient, eager to get back to the seclusion of the limousine." She "always hated shopping in America." Gradually the apartment took shape, and "seemed, at first, to do the thing I meant to have it do. It diminished New York, it made New York stay outside in the street." But "there was a peculiar instability in me. . . . From the moment I wakened and drank my coffee in the white bed, embraced by the silken curtains depicting reeds and roosters, the stirring within me began." "Alas!" she realized, "I couldn't live by things alone. . . . I had to have human beings in order to be myself."

So she summoned Hutchins Hapgood, Lincoln Steffens, Carl Van Vechten, Emma Goldman, and others, and created the salon at 23 Fifth Avenue. "I became a Species of Head Hunter, in fact. It was not dogs or glass I collected now, it was people. Important People." At her Evenings she "just let life express itself." She "stood apart, aloof and withdrawn, dressed in long, white dresses with maybe an emerald chiffon wrapped around me," but her influence was felt, and she gave her guests "a quite exciting sense of life."

The salon acquired a reputation, and Mabel Dodge became famous. She had successfully advertised Gertrude Stein, and the belief grew "that I had only to be in some way associated with a movement of any kind for it to be launched." Her "correspondence became enormous." Upton Sinclair, writing to her as "Dear Comrade," told her, "You need only come for half an hour, and the reporters will print anything you say. *Please!*" Max Eastman asked, "Will you take over the April or May number of the *Masses* magazine?" Walter Lippmann confided, "I spent last night at Oyster Bay with Roosevelt, and loved him more than ever."



Herschel Levit

But her great triumph was to conceive the idea of the Paterson textile-strike pageant. Big Bill Haywood was describing the inability of the Paterson strikers to get publicity, and, "in a small, shy voice," she said, "Why don't you bring the strike to New York and *show* it to the workers?" John Reed spoke up: "That's a great idea." And the thing was done.

While it was being done, John Reed fell in love with Mabel Dodge. How could he have helped it? She made it possible for him to stage the pageant: "I knew I was enabling Reed to do what he was doing. I knew he couldn't have done it without me. I felt that I was behind him, pouring all the power in the universe through myself to him." After the pageant was over, she took him to Italy, and, when they returned, they lived together at 23 Fifth Avenue. But it was not altogether satisfactory. For example: "I took my breakfast in bed, and he his at a little table by the bedside because I wanted him to. But he might as well have been gone from there for all he was with *me*. He drank coffee with the morning newspaper propped up before him, his honey-colored round eyes just popping over *'the news!'* Any kind of news as long as it had possibilities for thrill, for action, for excitement. Now newspapers have never meant anything to me."

Once he told Mrs. Dodge of talking with a prostitute, and "I threw myself on the floor and tried to faint." ("I had always tri hold Reed to me so firmly that he coul pass the barrier of my will and take another woman.") Reed finally revolted and ran away. Mrs. Dodge fled to Hutchins Hapgood's home, and "flung myself on the bed and sobbed loudly. But no one heard me but that mother-in-law of Hutch's and so it was wasted." Reed came back, however, saying, "I can't live without you." Another time: "Reed published the articles in a book called *Insurgent Mexico,* and had two de luxe copies made, bound in red morocco, for his mother and me. He dedicated the book, however, to his mother, and this made me silently angry." (*Insurgent Mexico* is dedicated to Charles Townsend Copeland. *Tamburlaine,* which is dedicated to Reed's mother, was supposed, according to Max Eastman, to

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be dedicated to him. This is very confusing.)

After many vicissitudes, the affair ended, and Mrs. Dodge said good-bye, not only "to the gay, bombastic, and lovable boy," but also "to the Labor Movement, to Revolution, and to anarchy. . . . Instinctively I turned once more to Nature and Art and tried to live in them." Of course she had other friends. Walter Lippmann, for instance—"I don't think Walter ever knew how strongly he figured in my fantasies." And Robert Edmond Jones—"I really dipped into Bobby's pool of life and drank." Once Jones had appendicitis, and she just shut her eyes and "sent my life to Bobby to save him." "That saved me," he told her afterwards.

She had other interests, too. For a time she took up Isadora Duncan, but, "after my disappointment over her when I found one couldn't do anything with her, I had not gone near Isadora again." Elizabeth Duncan, however, proved more tractable, and Mrs. Dodge set up a school for her: "I was always proud of the way I did that job at a distance. I thought out the whole thing, every detail of it, ordered it, and got it executed by letter." She had administrative ability.

Her friends appreciated her. Gertrude Stein wrote "Portrait of Mabel Dodge." Andrew Dasburg painted a picture, "The Absence of Mabel Dodge," and Arthur Lee did a statue, "Adoration of Mabel Dodge." Donald Evans wrote, "You yourself are ineffable," and addressed her as "Dear Wonderful Person." Walter Lippmann wrote on the photograph of himself he gave her, "Mabel Dodge, maker of oases." Max Eastman said, "You have something strange, something mysterious about you." And Maurice Sterne "made a large number of drawings, some of them very fine, all of them of Mabel Dodge."

It was Sterne, of course, who stepped into Reed's shoes. Reed came back: "Once a man loved me, he said, he would never get over it." But she was through with all that, and Sterne was saying, "I didn't mean to fall in love with you—but there's something *compelling* in you!" Sterne was a challenge: he wanted to be a painter, and she knew he ought to be a sculptor. After a good deal of ngling about this and other subjects, she to him one morning, "Let's go and get married." They went.

What with one thing and another, hers was a life full of strain. She tried Christian Science for a while, but it "wore off." Then she discovered Emma Curtis Hopkins, who counseled "the effortless way" and taught faith in God. This was so successful that "I gradually impelled all my entourage to her quiet asylum. Bobby, Maurice, Nina, Elizabeth, Andrew, and others." At the same time Mrs. Dodge was going to Dr. Jelliffe, a psychiatrist who had theories about cancer being the result of hatred. She tried to get Maurice Sterne to go to him too, but he wouldn't; so "I made Bayard [Boyesen] go and try to get over his drinking." From Dr. Jelliffe she turned to A. A. Brill, who advised activity, and this was arranged by her friend Arthur Brisbane, who gave her a job doing a column for the Hearst papers. The real path to salvation, however, was opened when she had a vision of an Indian—"I was extremely psychic"—and started west.

Anton Refregier

Thus ends the third volume in the saga of Mabel Dodge. The most important, the most irritating, and the most readable of the three, it is a book to be recommended to every social historian. There is no comparable account of the destruction that can be wrought by money when it is in the hands of intelligence and determination. The picture of some of the principal artists and thinkers of the period crawling around this pretentious, grasping, officious woman is like a nightmare. Undoubtedly Mrs. Dodge's intellectual vigor and her personal charm attracted her victims, but it was her money that gave her power over them. In Soviet America the book ought to be made into a film called *Art Under Capitalism.*

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Essays in Exhortation

REASONS FOR ANGER, *by Robert Briffault. Simon & Schuster.* $2.50.

THE title given to this collection of fourteen assorted papers on aspects of human folly under capitalism is in the nature of a reply to those conservatives who have said of Mr. Briffault's previous book, "All that Briffault says is true, but he needn't get so angry about it."

There is real reason for anger, Mr. Briffault shows, when one is confronted by the perpetuation of taboos, ignorances, superstitions, and century-old frauds by an owning class eager to prevent objective knowledge from undermining its pretentious and windy ideologies. Stupidity is not a constituent of human nature, he declares and proves, but is made to seem so by a propaganda emanating from those who, having seized wealth, the means of production, and governments, act on the theory that "the safety of incomes . . . demands that the world should be kept safe for stupidity."

The deliberate cultivation of inanity and insanity by the powerful, who give the social sanction only to those antics which make no adverse comment upon profit and property, will not endure much longer, in Mr. Briffault's opinion. Mr. Briffault is an optimist on the general subject of man, who he believes is even now emerging from his long infancy. "The meshes of thought have drawn closer," he says, "the realms of ignorance have shrunk." "At no previous period," he continues, "has the human race had greater powers of control over the conditions of its existence."

It is the author of that three-volume anthropological work, *The Mothers,* and not the author of *Europa,* who has written these essays. They bear the badge of the haste, the tendency to incomplete thought, the reliance upon expostulation, that diminished the value of his most important book. But he has an undeniable gift for phraseological vehemence and brilliance. Briffault's heart is in the right place, even if his facts sometimes are not. Perhaps he should claim less credit for the authorship of the concept of mind as a social product.

But his zeal for exposing the ramifications of the bourgeoisie's deliberate cultivation of stupidity is worth the twitching of an academic eyebrow. As essays these are interesting, and as exhortations they are very useful. Their purport is adequately expressed by this remark from the essay "Economic Determination of Intelligence": "Intelligence, which has been, and is, crippled by its economic determination, can be restored to its natural effectiveness and function only by emancipation from economic interests. The aim of social development, the abolition of class rule, is identical with the aim of intellectual development, the abolition of prejudice."

HENRY HART.

Not Propaganda

NEWS FROM TARTARY, *by Peter Fleming. Charles Scribner's Sons.* $3.

IN HIS introduction to this book, the author, a special correspondent for the London *Times,* writes that "to read a propagandist, a man with vested intellectual interests, is as dull as dining with a vegetarian."

That's strange. For I enjoyed reading all 381 pages of *News From Tartary*—and precisely because it was unvarnished propaganda of a snooty British imperialist. It is revealing, provocative political reading despite the author's modesty in protesting: "I know nothing, and care less, about political theory."

News from Tartary is a record of a seven-month journey of 3500 miles from Peiping, China, to Kashmir, India. The main purpose was to get into the Chinese province of Sinkiang, or Chinese Turkestan, bordering on the U.S.S.R. It was an adventurous trip, and Fleming not only describes it well, but has also provided splendid photographs.

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He gives us superficial insight into the many peoples he meets on the way. But then he admits he's no expert in this field. It is mostly an account of primitive races, smells, poverty, and even actual starvation—from the amateur viewpoint. There is some notice taken of the complex skein of Asiatic politics, but it is not until the author's arrival in Sinkiang that he gets into full stride. And you will recall that he is by no means a vulgar "propagandist."

It is true he started out on the first leg of his journey with a White Russian couple, the man a waiter in a White Russian café in Tientsin. There is also a sympathetic picture of another White Russian who, under Annenkov, helped to slaughter Siberian workers and peasants and was now tragically ending his days in the wilds of Asia. He could not accompany the author to Sinkiang because the White Russians there "had a low survival-value."

But the best evidence of the author's political impartiality will be found in the section describing Soviet-sympathetic Sinkiang. The chapters are headed "Dirty Work," "The Red Army Lends a Hand," "Russian Racketeers," "The New Imperialists," etc. These chapters follow immediately on one where, after months, the author meets his first British agent, and where he nearly swoons at the sight of the Union Jack.

Nice boy, that—one who makes statements "objectively." And it is most unfortunate, of course, that "The majority of these show the government of the Soviet Union in what will probably [?!] seem to most a discreditable light." He got his information on "good second-hand evidence—i.e., the evidence of reliable people [there's frankness for you!—W. C.] who have themselves witnessed the events or tendencies recorded."

What hurts this adventurous Britisher is the fact that Sinkiang is so friendly to the Soviets. And please remember:

> Great Britain's interest in the Province is obvious from a glance at the map. Sinkiang, bounded on the west by Russia, on the north by Outer Mongolia and on the east by Inner Mongolia and Northwest China, marches on the South with Tibet and British India. For centuries Indian merchants have crossed the Himalayan passes to trade with Kashgiria; and any major infringement by another Power of China's sovereign rights within Sinkiang must of necessity be viewed with concern, both from the economic and the strategic point of view, in Whitehall and Delhi.

Now that's to the point. And Fleming's grave concern over "China's sovereign rights within Sinkiang" is related to the fact that the Soviets built the Turksib Railway along the border, with the help of Bill Shatoff, American Wobbly. This brings Sinkiang within two weeks of Moscow. And it takes trade six weeks to get to India, over the Himalayan passes which are closed six months of the year.

True, the author does mention that unlike any other province of Nanking-ruled China, there is a People's Council in Sinkiang on which sit various races included in the population. But our Mr. Fleming isn't so easily taken in by that. He knows that this People's Council only goes "through the motions of administration," and is only "a façade of democratic enlightenment." He does mention that the government has established schools and medical service; that Sinkiang was being modernized; that many pupils even go to school to Soviet Tashkent. But there's something subversive about that.

Nowhere else in China had Fleming seen this. And certainly he found no People's Councils in India, where he soon went. Fleming did find heroic British officers who wined and dined him and showed him how happy people could live under the very shadow of British guns. How glad he was to get back to India and "civilization."

Fleming, and a Swiss newspaper girl who made the trip with him, finally arrived at a ritzy hotel in Srinagar, India. They came at dinner time. "Everyone was in evening dress. Anglo-India, starched and glossy," glared with disapproval at these dust-covered travelers.

I'm sure that the publication of *News from Tartary,* and a change to evening clothes, has again put Fleming into their British good graces.

WALT CARMON.

A Group of Poets

THE ASSASSINS, *by Frederick Prokosch. Harper & Bros.* $2.

HOMER'S GOLDEN CHAIN, *by Virginia Moore. Dutton.* $1.50.

NEW POEMS, *by Frederick Mortimer Clapp. Harper & Bros.* $2.

COLLECTED POEMS, *by Ford Madox Ford, with an introduction by William Rose Benét. Oxford University Press.* $3.

SHILOH, *by Edward Doro. G. P. Putnam's Sons.* $2.50.

IN POETRY, this book season has been distinguished by important new volumes from Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, and Genevieve Taggard, and the posthumous volume of A. E. Housman. Still to come are volumes by Spender and Auden, new poems by James Joyce, and the first solid presentation of the work of the Russian classic, Pushkin, in commemoration of the centenary of his death.

H. A. Blumenstiel

No very impressive new talent makes its appearance as did, earlier in the year, Kenneth Patchen in *Before the Brave* and Muriel Rukeyser in *Theory of Flight.* The strongest bid is made by Frederick Prokosch who has already made a good debut as a novelist with *The Asiatics.* His first volume of poetry, *The Assassins,* indicates that poetry is a natural medium for him. His craftsmanship is already distinguished but he relies dangerously on picturesqueness and dexterity. Having traveled widely, he has many pictures in his memory, and he is gifted with a genuine flair for handling words. But he should learn not to indulge himself, to examine carefully the simple meanings of what he puts down no matter how swelling the sound. He would then avoid such artificial and meaningless things as "the shrill swift road of suffering . . . the mountainous northern road of doing . . . the long white road of exhaustion."

Virginia Moore is an example of what mere facility can lead to. The verses in *Homer's Golden Chain* all have a dulcet, poetic sound; they nicely say the things acceptable to early adolescence and eternally senile academicism.

By contrast, *New Poems* by Frederick Mortimer Clapp is refreshing. Mr. Clapp is not a skilled craftsman. I have a feeling that he would get more distinction writing in prose, and that he would probably have written in prose, if there were a prose form beside the novel and the short story in which a writer could get attention as an artist. His descriptive pieces are flat but the reflective pieces are interesting and such poems as "History," "Bibliography," "Where Is Galilee?" are worth reading.

The most disappointing volume is Ford Madox Ford's collected poems. When it is good the virtues are usually prose virtues and recall lovelier, richer, more rhythmic and evocative passages in the novels and the books of memoirs. I cannot understand how William Rose Benét, introducing the book can write as he does of these poems. He selects as an example of outstanding rhymed free verse:

> **A multitude, throng upon throng**
> **of starlings,**
> **Successive orchestras of song,**
> **flung, like the babble of surf**
> **on the roadside turf.**

"That," says Benét, "is the conjuring of the exact sound." But what is exact in this mixed metaphor when "orchestras of sound" are flung "like a babble of surf"? Orchestras are, if anything, orderly; and who ever heard a surf, worth the name of surf, babble? The fact is that Mr. Ford in his poetry is unprecise; it is merely his precise, good prose gone clumsily loose in free verse. There are, of

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course, occasional good passages as one might expect from a writer of Mr. Ford's skill.

The most pretentious volume in this group is Edward Doro's *Shiloh,* a narrative poem of Christ, in which Judas is rehabilitated as the Savior's savior, in Mr. Doro's own personal apocrypha, and in which the pagan moon-goddess has an obscure and upstart role. Most of it is deliberately strange and unconsciously silly. It is a pity that Mr. Doro who has in many of his lines, images of power and lovely phrasing should misspend his talents on such sterile matter.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Integrity Needs Integration

'T AINT RIGHT, *by Westbrook Pegler.* Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

SOME years ago, when the recent realism in sports coverage in the daily press had not yet encroached upon the practice of offering overdressed press agentry as the straight McCoy (especially in connection with prize-fighting and wrestling, which at that time were at the height of that corruption about which the Hon. James A. Farley knows so much), there began to appear, in a column called "Speaking Out on Sports," some highly disquieting revelations. The wise guy who wrote the stuff even went so far as to intimate that the whole sports racket was merely a big business completely hogtied by political and racial questions, and in which the popular notion of competitive, may-the-best-man-win athletics was just come-on guff for suckers.

In fact, so much sociological comment appeared in these columns that many readers of the local press used to turn to this sports column to find out what was going on in the political world, and they found plenty that the political writers of the same papers never even whispered about. Writer and reader were getting along fine—a situation in which a publisher can be made to see the light. So Mr. Pegler graduated from debunking sports and became a general commentator. In this book a representative group of his more recent columns has been collected.

We all remember the alarum over Pegler's apologia for the West Coast lynching of certain kidnapers. "Fascist!" was cried throughout the liberal and labor press, in defense of the constitutional right of trial by jury and against lynch law. Pegler stuck to his guns, arguing that in his experience as a police reporter he had learned that our system of justice was a farce. Speaking as one of the "rabble," he justified that rabble's resort to direct-action justice. And we all remember his stinging columns against the Nazis and, later, his eloquent plea on behalf of Lawrence Simpson, which was followed by a no less eloquent retraction when he learned Simpson was a Red. There is a range of contradiction here, multiplied in these collected columns, which shows Pegler to be what anyone could expect him or any intelligent newspaperman to be: aware of many of the facts of life, yet failing to see them as facets of an organic, interrelated whole; and at the same time, not aware of certain important facts of life with which he has not come in contact because the capitalist press doesn't send its best reporters —if any—on certain kinds of stories.

It is obvious, as one reads this entertaining collection, which contains the famous parody of Brisbane, that Pegler is an honest and observant and courageous journalist. It is obvious also that he has those two indispensable qualities of the really great journalist, the habit of seeking out first-hand contact with the material he writes about, and then writing about it in strong, plain, witty language. What he lacks is first, the rigorous conscious discipline of *always* establishing first-hand contact with his material and studying it thoroughly, and second, ironing out his own contradictions by developing an integrated point of view so that the world he writes about makes sense both to him and his readers.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

Romantic Fantasy

THEY WALK IN THE CITY, *by J. B. Priestley. Harper & Bros.* $2.50.

ALTHOUGH they chase each other about (lost lovers in a frightening world) through a pleasant wax museum of Priestley characters, the hero and heroine of this novel are very simple youngsters, and, except for a certain amiability, almost unindividualized. Nor do they seem to represent anything, except the traditional Boy and Girl of romantic fantasy. They have been brought up in poverty in a dismal manufacturing town, but they are worlds apart from the young workers of, say, Hanley's novels, and are meant to be. Life may seem pretty bad in Haliford, Priestley says, speaking of his heroine, "yet somehow out of this dreadful mess of rubber teats, sinister teething-powders, dirty linen, overheated rooms, pastry, fish and chips, dubious laxatives, dreadful patent medicines, ignorance, swinishness, savagery, had emerged this healthy and handsome young creature." And indeed the young creature's whole family, like many others in the town, flourished in the midst of weeds and had a very jolly time of it. We are given them as a hard nut for the formularized proletarian novel to crack. "Every week-end with them seemed like Christmas. . . . They belonged to that section of the workers which is the despair of the austere revolutionary." Even when Rose and Edward go to London, although the jobs they get are not very good or permanent, they do get them, and there is not the emphasis on sore feet and empty bellies one might expect from a less cheery writer. They suffer chiefly from uncertainty and separation.

Since they ignite as soon as they see each other, and stay ignited, the story is concerned with the practical problem of the lovers' staying together long enough for courtship. They are separated by everything from Edward's locking himself up accidentally in a bathroom, to Rose's being mowed under in a fascist attack on a Communist meeting. (The dust

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jacket calls it a "Communist riot.") Priestley describes the Communist leader as a well-intentioned, unimaginative Northcountryman who parrots his Russian comrades and talks of "liquidating" the bourgeoisie only because, no sadist, he does not see them as real people.

The comedy of errors ends on an Oppenheim note when a big-shot international adventurer is murdered in a house of ill fame to which Rose had been lured to serve his pleasure. Edward, after a good deal of detective work, finds her there alone after the murderers have fled. She wants to sneak off to Haliford without more ado. But in a speech of impassioned incoherence that is apparently intended to provide the key to the allegory, Edward refuses. They must tell the police. "'People can't go fighting and killing other people—I thought that the other night when they were all at it in Trafalgar Square and then the police came to clear up the mess—and we say it's no business of ours. . . . I want to know why this house was here, why this man came here, why somebody killed him—what it's all about. We can't go on like this,' he continued, strangely, as it seemed to her—'With you being lost, and then me lost, looking for you, and both of us lost, and things just happening to us and we don't know why.'" They can't, for certain, because the book ends on the next page. And however commendable such a confused and undirected plea for understanding is on simple Edward's part, it is hardly enough from Mr. Priestley to keep the novel from seeming nearly as pointless as it is diverting and easy to read.

OBED BROOKS.

Brief Reviews

MIDWEST: A REVIEW. 650 *Gateway Building, Minnealopis.* 15c.

This is the first issue of the magazine of the Midwest Federation of Arts and Professions, and a very important one. A mere list of its contributors, who include Meridel Le Sueur, Edgar Lee Masters, Alfred Morang, Joe Jones, Meyer Levin, Kerker Quinn, Harry Thornton Moore, B. A. Botkin, and, among the communications, William Ellery Leonard and Sherwood Anderson, gives no notion of its interest and importance. It is not only a literary magazine for the expression of the distinctive life of their region for Middle-Western writers. In the fullest sense it is an expression of Midwest culture. Professor Botkin's article, "Regionalism: Cult or Culture?" is fine and illuminating, and is given pages of incidental but pointed documentation in the section of union news giving information of local Newspaper Guild Chapters, the Cleveland Inter-Professional Association, Writers Union branches in the Midwest areas, Artists Unions, and organizations of W.P.A. musicians; and in the pages dealing with suppressed murals in public buildings in Midwest cities. There is living breath in *Midwest: A Review.*

THE MAXIMS OF LA ROCHEFOUCAULD. *Newly translated with a foreword by Louis Kronenberger. Stackpole Sons.* $1.75.

Louis Kronenberger's translation of one of the most remarkable classics in literature is clear and beautifully turned. La Rochefoucauld's wisdom is based on human self-centeredness, and with that X-ray he saw into the human interior with a penetration that ranks him among the great psychologists of the company of Montaigne, Saint-Simon and

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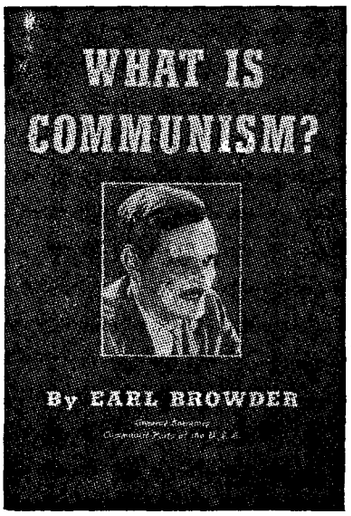

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Proust. But, as Mr. Kronenberger shows in his graceful and illuminating foreword, it is a partial wisdom. *It is sufficient* as an analysis of the motives and conduct of a privileged class whose duty, since they not only lived for themselves, but had the world live for them, was self-indulgence, and whose ambition was greater self-indulgence. Nevertheless, to the extent that there is a capacity in all of us to exploit advantage, and life provides some occasion to all of us for selfishness to operate, La Rochefoucauld's wisdom is not likely ever to become obsolete.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LIBERTY LEAGUE, *by Grace Hutchins. International Pamphlets.* 2c.

The composition of the Liberty League, its purposes both real and avowed, the parallel in dominant figures and program with the Republican Party are here given in a vivid analysis based upon clearly marshaled data. Its circulation should be a powerful aid in the drive against reaction.

AUDUBON, *by Constance Rourke. Harcourt, Brace & Co. Illustrated.* $3.

This is the November co-selection (with A. E. Housman's *More Poems*) of the Book-of-the-Month club. Audubon, a true genius, was not only a self-taught artist and naturalist but had to be his own promoter and salesman in the publication of his epoch-making works. His career was a noble one, reflecting the pioneering courage and resourcefulness of America in the early eighteen-hundreds; Miss Rourke's account of it is a good example of scholarly yet evocative biographical writing.

Also Published This Week

(A listing of important new books not necessarily recommended.)

Maiden Castle, by John Cowper Powys. Simon & Schuster. $2.50. Novel.
Selected Poems, by Witter Bynner. Edited by Robert Hunt. Knopf. $2.50.
Not under Forty, by Willa Cather. Knopf. $2. Essays and reminiscences.
Prize Stories of 1936. O. Henry Award, edited by Harry Hansen. Doubleday. Doran. $2.50.
The New York Tribune Since the Civil War, by Harry W. Baehr, Jr. Dodd, Mead. $3.
The Return of the Weed, by Paul Horgan. Harper. $2. Novel of the Southwest.
Why We Went to War, by Newton D. Baker. Published by Harper for the Council on Foreign Relations. $1.50.
The Shipbuilders, by George Blake. Lippincott. $2.50. Novel; English Book Society choice.

Recently Recommended

Bitter Victory, by Louis Guilloux, translated by Samuel Putnam. McBride. $2.50. War novel.
Courthouse Square, by Hamilton Basso. Scribner's. $2.50. Novel of the South.
Æsop Said So, lithographs by Hugo Gellert. Covici, Friede. $1.75. Fables in modern dress.
Mexico: A Revolution by Education, by George I. Sánchez. Viking. $2.75.
The War in Outline, by Liddell Hart. Random House. $2. A critical history of strategy.
How to Run a War, by Bruce Winton Knight, Knopf. $2. An unsentimental blueprint for war-mongers.
Caleb Catlum's America, by Vincent McHugh. Illustrated by George T. Hartmann. Stackpole. $2.50. Tall tales with sociological overtones.
The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of the Jews in Germany. Knight, Inc. $2. A documentary study. Introduction by the Bishop of Durham.
The Negro as Capitalist, by Abram L. Harris. Am. Academy of Political & Social Science. $3.
More Poems, by A. E. Housman. Knopf. $2.
Lincoln Steffens Speaking. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50. A collection of Steffens's essays, sketches, etc.
All Brides Are Beautiful, by Thomas Bell. Little, Brown. $2.50. Novel.
An American Testament, by Joseph Freeman. Farrar & Rinehart. $3. Autobiography of a NEW MASSES editor. Book Union choice for October.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Leslie Howard's "Hamlet"—Dance records and recitals—Soviet art and some new films

ANYONE within striking distance of New York now has the unusual opportunity of seeing either or both of two worthy productions of *Hamlet,* and to the Shakespeare fan there is a sufficient variety of treatment and interpretation to make seeing both a pleasure.

Leslie Howard's production, which he produced and directed and which he graces as the harassed prince, opened under the great handicap of having to compete with the fine Guthrie McClintic production in which John Gielgud shines. It is a safe assumption that faced with this handicap, the Howard company strained every fiber to give us a *Hamlet* second to none.

They have very nearly succeeded. The cast is exceptional, and in some roles definitely superior to the distinguished McClintic company; Stewart Chaney's settings have sweep and power, and his eleventh-century costumes are memorable in the simplicity of their line and the subtlety of their color. And what about Mr. Howard? For his unsententious conception of the character one can only give thanks, and his somewhat unconventional modern-man rendering is consistent and serves to keep more clearly traceable than is customary the tangled threads of the second half of the play. All this, however, could not have been said of his performance during the first third. This reviewer got the uncomfortable feeling that Mr. Howard was just reeling off the first scenes in a traditional elocutionary style. We have all seen legitimate stage actors greatly overact the first time they face a movie camera. Perhaps the converse was happening during the early part of Mr. Howard's performance; he seemed unconsciously to be leveling out the contrasts in tension and tempo as if he might be afraid of the camera's high fidelity. But for the rest of the time he was supple and keen and eloquent.

But something which had more portent for the theater than anything in the play happened after the closing second-night curtain. In response to prolonged if not thunderous applause, Mr. Howard stepped forth and did a bold thing. He made a frank, graceful, and modest appeal for those present to go out of the theater and engage in a campaign of word-of-mouth advertising for the show. This, he said, was necessary to prolong its life in view of its poor reception by the press. Agreeing that the newspapermen's right to their opinions was "sacred," he nevertheless appealed to the audience to save the play from the "irreparable damage" which the reviews might do it. He made no argument for the continuance of his production beyond remarking that he didn't think it would do Broadway any harm "if we stay around here a little while longer."

One can only surmise that Mr. Howard was doing his best for the members of his company. Yet his words had the fateful accents of a Canute's. What reason is there for Broadway to support two good and expensively produced *Hamlets* at the same time? The fact that Mr. Howard (or Mr. McClintic either, for that matter) asks us to is not enough. Mr. Howard by his appeal recognized in a partial sense the need for the theater and audience to work together in a coöperative organism, but at the same time he asked the audience to assume a responsibility when he had not consulted that audience to determine whether his venture was such as to warrant it. An audience can be organized to support a theater only when it has been consulted and is convinced of the importance of what it is asked to support. One has the feeling that in such a pre-production conference the audience would have decided that one good *Hamlet* was enough, and that there was little or no sense trying to put over two at once. Even though such a consultation did not take place, it seems a safe bet that the same verdict will be rendered, Mr. Howard's appeal to the contrary notwithstanding.

Following the sudden death of his *So Proudly We Hail* and *Stork Mad,* James R. Ullman has taken unto his bosom as co-producer Mark ("Sobsister") Hellinger, and together they have put on a farce called *Double Dummy,* which is all about how a Milquetoast of a college professor learned enough about contract bridge (and a couple of other things) to beat a champ. This stunt, you should understand, is the latest brain-child of a paroled-convict brain guy, played by the prognathous Charles D. Brown, and allows for the sort of situations and laughs dear to the heart of many playwrights and, indeed, many playgoers. Tom McKnight and Doty Hobart wrote it, and at this distance it seems probable that you could take your twelve-year-old daughter without fear of having to answer embarrassing questions. A. W. T.

MUSIC

THE first of the high-priced musical shows, *Red, Hot, and Blue,* has arrived in New York with the usual Park Avenue fanfare that greets a Cole Porter score. Its class appeal is admirably demonstrated by the companies, for none of the cheaper twenty-five- or thirty-five-cent recording lists has even bothered to release the hit tunes, while both Victor and Brunswick, at more than double the price, have made potpourri of all the tunes, "dogs" included.

On Victor 25440 the King of Saccharine, Guy Lombardo, has ground out an uninspired version of "Ridin' High," in which the listener may feel pity for the efforts on mellophone of Dudley Fosdick, who was once a luminary with Red Nichols and Miff Mole. On another Victor disk, 25432, Eddy Duchin

J. A. Cornin

couples "It's Delovely" with "You've Got Something," both of which are hits and thoroughly undistinguished. Duchin's piano playing still features rippling octaves and a very weak left hand, while his expanded band sounds very much like its predecessor. He does possess a style all his own, and it is one that finds favor with both debutantes and what are known as younger matrons. "It's Delovely's" only excuse for existence is as a vehicle for Ethel Merman, who has seen fit not to record the number.

Brunswick gives the same coupling to Leo Reisman and his bigger society band. Both sides are very lush, while "It's Delovely" has one of the most excruciatingly out-of-tune vocals by Sally Singer that has ever been captured on wax. Not to be outdone by anybody, Victor has put out a medley of all the tunes on a dollar-and-quarter disk by chorus, operatic soloists, and a band that does not even compare with the Alvin House orchestra. If the reader happens to like Cole Porter's score, he deserves to own this record.

Beatrice Lillie's new extravaganza, *The Show Is On,* may do a bit better by us, for Hoagy ("Rockin' Chair," "Washboard Blues") Carmichael wrote the score, and a small black and white band with Cosy Cole and Bunny Berigan is given a couple of spots on the stage. Teddy Wilson and Bunny Berigan are both preparing to record the tunes for Brunswick, while Lombardo, by virtue of his contract, will probably have first crack at them on Victor. The Romberg score of *Forbidden Melody* has not yet been heard by this department, and there is small likelihood of its ever being heard.

Tucked away on Decca 975 is a record that is a healthy contrast to Broadway show tunes: Albert Ammons and his orchestra's playing of "Mile or Mo'," Bird Rag," and "Early Mornin' Blues." The blues has some fine piano playing and a wonderful trumpet chorus played on an instrument that just would not

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stay in tune. The rhythm section of this band has the relaxation and precision one finds only in Negro units, and the tunes are no more than traditional twelve-bar blues and a variation of "Tiger Rag," which in turn was a variation from something else.

Sasey Bill, one of the great blues singers, has still another new record with that same two-guitar, piano, bass, and drum accompaniment: "Gonna Take My Time" and "We Gonna Move" (Vocalion 03373). For the best of Bill Weldon's recent records, however, we still recommend Vocalion's "Back Door" and "Front Door" blues.

The best of the new Goodman records are "Organ Grinder's Swing," by virtue of Jimmy Mundy's disguising arrangement, and "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (Victor 25445). His very latest records, not yet released, feature vocal choruses by Ella Fitzgerald, an engaging and unusual Harlemite who is happily free from Helen Ward's various effects. The new Wilson records on Brunswick are not worthy of him.

In a few weeks we will be able to vary our routine of talking about Goodman and Wilson records exclusively, for by that time a colored band under the name of Count Basie will have recorded a substantial part of its repertoire. Basie's is possibly the most exciting orchestra I have ever heard, and their Decca recording contract, for a sum far less than union scale, will make a very interesting exhibit in the drive to rid the phonograph industry of the cheapest kind of chiseling.

HENRY JOHNSON.

THE FINE ARTS

WHATEVER you are doing this moment, should you be at home trying to read this magazine and listening to the radio at the same time, should you be in the subway on your way to a heavy date, should you be in the dentist's office waiting to have a tooth yanked out, should you be in a hot discussion with your neighbor, or should you be sitting in a cafeteria drinking coffee, just grab your hat and coat and go to the Squibb Gallery on the thirty-third floor of the Squibb Building, Fifty-seventh St. and Fifth Ave., New York, and see an exhibition of Soviet art sponsored by the American-Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union. It will be on show till November 28.

If you were ever in the Soviet Union, and if you remember the big thrill you got when you entered a new world and sensed the life and color of the people, you will get the same feeling of splendor and youth of that country when you enter the gallery. For the past year this Soviet art exhibition has been traveling throughout the United States and it should by no means stop with New York, but continue to cities that have not had the pleasure of seeing it. There are on view more than 160 selected paintings from every section and republic of the Soviet Union, and with the help of Christian Brinton, the committee has done a splendid job of displaying the pictures in good light and not overcrowding the walls.

The richness of color and the variation in viewpoint is so impressive, that the observer can see at a glance that art in the Soviet Union is going ahead, and that talks on formalism don't mean a thing. Artists, when given an opportunity to express themselves, will do so to the best of their ability, and with the environment and the state fostering art, one can see without a doubt that a high level of cultural development is inevitable. Although space does not permit me to go into details of the paintings on display, I would like to own Aleksandr Shevchenko's *Fruit Seller,* Aleksandr Deyneka's *Mural Design,* Boris Vladimirovich Johanson's *Winter,* Pavel V. Kuznetsov's *Landscape* and *Shepherd Boy,* Semen Andreyevich Pavlov's *Old Petrograd,* and, if you don't mind, I'll also take the works of Saryan, Pimenov, Lushin, Kashina, Kravchenko. I would have liked to have seen the works of Lebedev, Tishler, Kukriniksi, too, which for some reason weren't included in the show.

GROPPER.

THE DANCE

THE NEW DANCE LEAGUE, in its first concert of the season, presented Tamiris and, for the first time, her full-length suite, *Momentum,* for which Herbert Haufreucht wrote the music.

The composition is developed, principally, in group movements through six themes: "Unemployed," "SH!—SH!—," "Legion," "Nightriders," "Diversion," and "Disclosure," episodes of various meaning and intensity in the life of the jobless worker. Opening with the obvious conflict between the march of the unemployed and the forces of oppression, *Momentum* moves into "Legion," a satiric piece on flag-waving patriotteers, and is climaxed with the fast-moving lynch scene, "Nightriders." "Diversion" is a speed-up variation on the "SH!—" theme with Tamiris in a gaudy night-club manner; this is the circus and the beating of the drums that prelude the warning "Disclosure," an endless mechanical procession of ominously grim figures in gas masks.

Tamiris needs no program notes. She believes in the simple, direct statement. Her choreography is built, obviously, for mass audiences; there can be no question of meaning or intention, nothing oblique or obscure in her work; simple satire in the jazz vein is undoubtedly her best medium, and she uses it with little restraint.

What fault there is with *Momentum,* or with any of Tamiris's compositions, lies in this eagerness to be forthright. She leans rather heavily on literary and literal elements, tends to be too obvious, a tendency which destroys a good bit of the inherent dramatic quality of her subject matter. And as to this spirit of abandonment which is hers, while it may be a good quality in specific instances, it tends to create farce where the dancer intends satire, or even irony. "SH!—SH!—" (except for the off-stage vocal accompaniment—a repetition, and annoying, of the syllables SH!—SH!—) was comparatively

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restrained; but "Legion," with its flag waving, was much too obviously over-statement to carry telling effect; on the contrary, it slowed up rather than built up the movement of the composition towards its climax.

"Disclosure" was effective for all its being over-long and repetitious, which was perhaps owing to the quality of the ideas involved. A syncopated parade of Otto Dixon's gas masks makes good theater—and Tamiris has indicated in *Momentum* a better knowledge of theater than she has for these many past seasons.

Unquestionably, the composition needs a good deal of work, but its sentiment and execution (hampered somewhat by the unevenness of the group) were sufficiently good and exciting for an enthusiastic audience.

OWEN BURKE.

THE SCREEN

IT IS amazing how the bright showmanship and plenitude of money, which endow the productions of Samuel Goldwyn no matter how superficial they are, will make them seen authentic and genuine. Edna Ferber's *Come and Get It* (United Artists) is an excellent example. As a matter of fact, all of Miss Ferber's works which have been made into films—*Cimarron, So Big,* and *Show Boat*—have been called perfect film material. The reason is that Miss Ferber's literary method has production values similar to those in Hollywood films, which (for instance) make this story of a Wisconsin robber baron more appealing than Dreiser's *The Financier* or *The Titan.*

There is a clever device in *Come and Get It* that has fooled even some of our left-wing critics into accepting it as an epic of American frontier life: the use of naturalistic material as a background for the plot. The opening sequence, which was directed by Richard Rosson and photographed by Ray Binger and Paul Eagler (Howard Hawkes and William Wyler directed the film proper) is in reality a short document on the felling of timber, getting the logs down river to the mill, and finally cutting them into lumber. Some of the leading characters appear in this sequence, thus establishing their relationship to the "frontier and pioneering" theme. What one has here is the epic struggle of man against primitive nature. This is what made Miss Ferber's *Cimarron* an epic and what saved *The Covered Wagon* from being another mere western. A more recent example is King Vidor's *Texas Rangers.* I don't mean to imply that using naturalistic material is not a legitimate device; but that when it is used as in the film under discussion, it is false.

The logging sequence also establishes Barney Glasgow (Edward Arnold) as a ruthless lumberjack who decided to become the richest man in Wisconsin. It also serves to establish his relationship to his men and their work. But this is not followed through. In the second half of the film, when he has become the most famous rugged individualist of the Middle West the plot goes psychoanalytic (in the Hollywood sense) and concentrates on his infatuation for the daughter of the girl he once loved but jilted for another who had a partnership in a lumber business. His son also loves the girl and they come to blows. At the crucial moment the girl calls Barney an old man and Barney is suddenly a beaten man. Not once does the film attempt to show us the less sensational but more dramatic relationship of the capitalist's relationship to the men in his paper mill. It might have been interesting to see how Barney came into power and how he held it. There is only a passing reference to Theodore Roosevelt's anti-trust campaign and Barney's reaction to it. But even that short scene indicated what *Come and Get It* might have been. It still carries the pleasure-giving American myth of the glories of the self-made man. And like the Warner film on Robert Dollar, and Universal's *Diamond Jim* and *Sutter's Gold, Come and Get It* is a romantic picture of young America and another tale of a captain of industry: his sex and love life. Only Edward Arnold's splendid performance holds the film together.

Columbia's latest venture into the satire of our middle-class rural life is *Theodora Goes Wild.* Although it is old stuff, the story of the girl who is suppressed by middle-class morality and who finally breaks loose has the elements of brilliance. Unfortunately the scenario and Richard Boleslavsky's treatment are so artificial that it succeeds only in becoming an occasionally very funny farce. But its greatest asset is its revelation of Irene Dunne as a swell comedienne. To those of you who know Miss Dunne only as the *Back Street* type, this will be a pleasant surprise.

Song of China, a native film about three generations of family life in China, will be of interest to those who are on the lookout for something unusual. The treatment is largely influenced by the old German silent film and it is acted with a great deal of sincerity and simplicity. It has English titles and a synchronized musical score played on native instruments. You will be amused by a Chinese arrangement of a tango.

PETER ELLIS.

★

The Radio

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups. Readers are asked to report at once any anti-working-class bias expressed by these programs or their sponsors.)

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Seattle Symphony Orchestra, with Cameron conducting, Thursdays at 8 p.m., Columbia.

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Raymond Gram Swing, commenting on international affairs. Fridays at 9 p.m., Mutual.

The March of Time. Thursdays at 10:30 p.m., Columbia.

LOCAL

Sidney Kaufman, discussing current movies, Fridays at 9 p.m., Station W2XR, N. Y.

The Screen

WORTH SEEING

The Son of Mongolia. The first native film to come from the Mongolian People's Republic, at the Cameo, N. Y.

As You Like It. Elisabeth Bergner as a light-footed Rosalind.

The Loves of Toni (55th Street, N. Y.). A French film with a class understanding.

Millions of Us, a fine labor short. Watch for it in your locality.

Nine Days a Queen. Nova Pilbeam and Cedric Hardwicke in a film about Lady Jane Grey.

Carnival in Flanders (*La Kermesse Héroique*—Filmarte, 202 W. 58th St., N. Y.). A prize-winning French film that's good fun.

The Theater

THUMBS UP

Johnny Johnson (44th Street, N. Y.). The season's first production by the Group Theater, by Paul Green. Kurt ("Dreigroschenoper") Weill wrote the music.

Two Hundred Were Chosen (48th Street. N. Y.). E. P. Conkle's play about the Alaskan "resettled" group, with Will Geer.

It Can't Happen Here, Sinclair Lewis's anti-fascist novel dramatized by the W.P.A., at the following theaters: Adelphi, N. Y.; Jefferson, Birmingham, Ala.; Mayan and Figueroa (Yiddish), Los Angeles; Columbia, San Francisco; Baker, Denver; Park, Bridgeport, Conn.; Palace, Hartford, Conn.; Blackstone, Chicago; Keith, Indianapolis; Repertory, Boston; Lafayette, Detroit; City, Newark, N. J.; Warburton, Yonkers, N. Y.; Carter, Cleveland; Moore, Seattle; Scottish Rite, Tacoma.

Gilbert & Sullivan (Martin Beck, N. Y.). The Rupert D'Oyly Carte company in superlative production of the Savoy operettas. *Pinafore,* which will continue through Saturday, Nov. 21, will be followed by a week's run of *Iolanthe.*

Hamlet (Imperial, N. Y.). Leslie Howard's somewhat unconventional but impressive version.

Hamlet (Empire, N. Y.). John Gielgud as the Dane, plus Lillian Gish, Judith Anderson, and Arthur Byron.

Tovarich (Plymouth, N. Y.). Slightly slanderous but very entertaining comedy with a swell cast, including a newcomer, Marta Abba.

The Art Galleries

Anti-War Art. A showing of five centuries' work along this line, sponsored by the American Artists' Congress and the Artists' Union of Chicago, at the Michigan Square Building.

Elias Goldberg. Seventeen oils, Another Place, 43 West 8th St., N. Y.

Judson Briggs. Twenty-four oils, Uptown Gallery, 249 West End Ave., N. Y.

Tromka. Oils and drawings, A.C.A. Gallery, 52 West 8th St. N. Y.

Brooklyn Museum. A special showing of six Americans: Brook, du Bois, Kroll, Sheeler, Sloan, Flanagan.

American Artists School. An exhibition of photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and Ruth Rozaffy.

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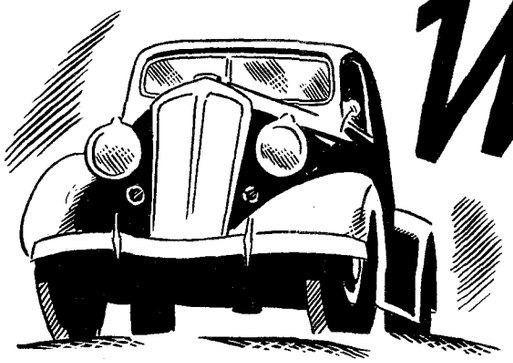

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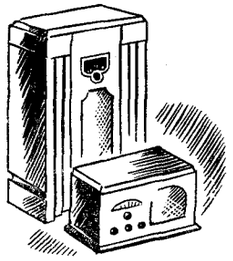

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